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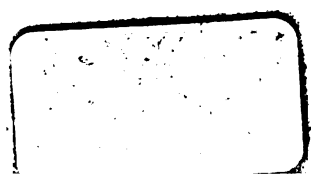
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FORES'S
SPORTING NOTES
AND
SKETCHES.

FORES'S SPORTING NOTES & Sketches

A Quarterly Magazine

DESCRIPTIVE OF

BRITISH, INDIAN, COLONIAL, AND
FOREIGN SPORT.

WITH

Thirty-two Full-page Illustrations.

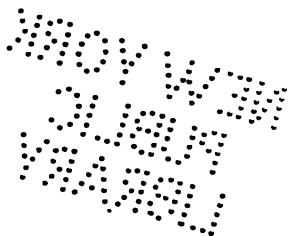
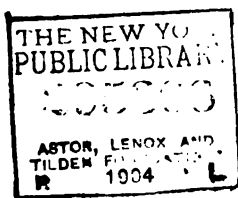
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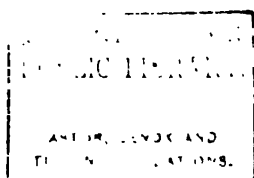
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The biggest buck
leapt into the air



FORES'S

SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

WARM WANDERINGS.

By KIRLY HARE.



CENTRAL AMERICA, half-a-score degrees north of the equator, has a climate fit for frying without need of fire. It was my fate to frizzle there *en route* back to civilisation from more northern Pacific wilds. Costa Rica, Mosquito, and Nicaragua, being on, or adjacent to, my road across, I wandered around them a while, frizzling.

In the green shadow of the forest, on an overthrown statue a dozen feet long, I was seated, wondering what manner of man my seat might have been, or represented. Carefully I examined the stone and its surroundings. Heavy frowning brows divided by a deep furrow, clean-cut eyes, broad jaw and massive neck, a broad-bladed spear held to the chest in both hands, showed me that I sat upon the stomach of a warrior. Upon his breast was the Maya sacred symbol, a Maltese cross, showing that my seat had been a mighty chieftain. Perhaps that other statue lying in fragments, a small womanly face with large gentle eyes, was my seat-warrior's wife; great rough-browed fighters mostly draw those tender women to their souls. Perhaps that broken bowl, painted with lines, dots, and figures, was their wedding goblet, from which the bridegroom quaffed strong berry-wine, and the bride returned the pledge in sober *tiste*. Those 'clowns of Chontales' were fond of wine and women. And now gone are they and their rude civilisation, and degenerate Woolwas wander over the Chondals' holy places.

Overshadowing me was a tree such as tropic nature loves; half dead, yet still bearing a few green branches and an infinite world of alien life. Pale orchids, ruff-like ferns, various-hued lianas, climbing-moss tendrils, were piled on the mouldering

branches, seemingly all growing from a single trunk. Through meshes of ivy-vine dainty fern-fronds showed their curly tips; purple dendrobium clung to the lianas—parasites of a parasite—and thin-leaved cacti thrust pink-flowering arms from every naked spot. Here, a baby palm pushed its head through a pale sea of moss; there, a mass of flowers hung suspended in mid-air. Beautiful things and hideous, poisons and antidotes, harmless creatures and deadly, the glory of life and the dull shadow of death.

In front of me stretched a savannah, on which grazed and dozed a herd of deer. Smooth and grey and burnt was the grass, with bright clumps of tangled liana and convolvulus, and lonely calabash-trees, edged by a wilderness of forest. The round naked hills of Mosquito quivered in hot air, white balls of cloud flecked a turquoise sky, while from time to time breaths of wind sighed across the savannah, bowing the grey grass, rustling the white moss-tails, shivering the scarlet calabash-tufts, then dying silently in the forest depths.

Around me were broken statues and shattered columns, fragments of earthenware with painted figures in black and scarlet, celts of polished basalt, legs of arabesque-carved *metlaté*, and colossal heads with staring eyes, amongst which flowering creepers and glossy-leaved vines wound close-clinging arms. Ruins of a race extinct, memorials of a language dead, hieroglyphs of superstition lost, ornaments and weapons altogether forgotten. And a live man sat on a statue-warrior's stomach watching a lively herd of deer; for now, lo! they were all wide awake and in the full blaze of the sun.

To return to the living from the dead is a relief, so I spare the reader every becoming moral—all of a very superior kind—which those stony relics brought to my mind. I might say that I shed a tear in thinking of the poor Indian whose untutored mind, &c. But it would not be true, for I had forgotten my pocket-handkerchief. I might say I laughed at sight of such grotesque old guys; but I did not laugh, it was too hot; and my mind never possessed Gray's double-elegy-power of reflection, so I merely observe that the deer were on the move, apparently troubled at sight of a new arrival.

It was only a grey ox, quietly grazing on the far side of the savannah. Oxen were common enough in Chontales, being bred there for the San Salvador market, and of course some would stray from the herd and run wild. Such 'cimaron' cattle

were to be met with all over the country. Why should so common a sight affect the deer?

Solitary deer might be found feeding in the full heat of noonday, but a herd would always keep in shade unless driven from it by suspected danger. So I watched that ox, and presently was struck by a peculiarity about its forelegs, which looked thick and crooked. Slowly and carelessly it moved on, grazing here, dozing there, but never progressing straight; always circling in one direction. Presently the off-side came into my view, and I saw that a man was walking beside the off-shoulder, one hand on the near horn, in the other a gun. No wonder the beast's forelegs looked queer! Nearer and nearer to the herd circled the ox, which I felt sure was as much interested in the game as its sporting owner; while the deer gazed suspiciously, but made no farther movement.

It was slow work watching such monotonous circling, and I almost fell asleep. The silence was dreamy. Hotter and hotter the sultry beams poured down, wave upon wave. The forest-flies, large as humble-bees and venomous as scorpions, ceased to prospect the tenderest portions of my person, or to balance themselves in sunny crevices of the leaves, and retired for their noonday siesta. The glossy black crickets swarmed no longer over my body, but thoughtfully stared me out of countenance from the shade of sticks and leaves. The hideous great spiders, yellow and spiky, sank back into their holes, hanging on to the edge by their claws. And still, in that blazing heat, the deer stood on the savannah in the sun, with that ox and man stealthily circling round them. Presently the bucks began to toss their heads and stamp. Then the long gun-barrel—painted with black gum that it might not sparkle—slid across the ox's back, a jet of pale fire flashed forth, and the biggest buck leapt into the air.

By lucky chance the hunter had chosen his range at a point just opposite to me, and the herd headed my way. Down the savannah they rushed, led by a noble buck, to within fifty yards of where I sat with rifle ready. Then they disappeared under the trees, led by another buck. The late leader lay prone upon the grass.

While reloading, I turned to look for my brother sportsman, and, behold, that wondrous ox was racing away like a Derby crack, bearing its master in safety to the hills. I whooped frantically, in correct forest falsetto, till the ox stopped and its

rider turned and looked at me. I waved my hat and made the most impressive signals of friendliness, till my arms ached; and, oh, wasn't I hot! The ox still stood, immovable, with its rider still staring. I advanced with arms delicately outspread; I patted my chest, and pointed to heaven. No go. I kissed each hand alternately to him, salaamed orientally, muttered powerful imprecations, and perspired profusely, and—yes, at last, the man made a movement. With most significant care he loaded his black-gummed 'gaspape' and then trotted towards me. Ostentatiously laying down my rifle, while unbuttoning my holster-flap and easing up the pistol, I advanced. Wary, indeed, are the greetings in that most sultry clime.

For a 'how-do-you-do' is oft whistled with lead,
A handshake gives place to a plug in the head,
And you're dropped in your boots 'stead of dying in bed.

'Buenos dias, caballero,' drawled the hunter, with his thumb on the hammer and finger on the trigger of his gaspipe.

'Buenos dias,' I replied, leaning, with much affectation, on the butt of my trusty revolver.

Then we took stock of one another, with the politest carefulness.

My new acquaintance had a slender frame, covered with dull yellowish-brown skin, long straight black hair, glittering eyes—*à fleur de tête*, shapeless sort of nose, and wrinkled mouth; evidently a pure-blooded Indian, and about as ugly as they make them. On his part, he naturally recognised a gentle white man—a sunburnt 'macho'—from whom no wanton injury could be apprehended, who probably possessed a pocket-pistol loaded with stimulative refreshment.

Simultaneously we dropped our weapons, looked as pleasantly at each other as our respective countenances permitted, and shook hands. I produced the expected refreshment, whereat my new acquaintance smilingly displayed many yellow teeth, and we drank to each other's health from the same flask, thus becoming regular 'compadres.' The bucks were packed on the ox's back, and we returned together to my temporary camp.

'That is a wonderful ox of yours,' I remarked, as we walked through the forest. 'Is that mode of hunting common here?'

'No,' replied the Indian. 'It takes too much trouble to train the animals; and, after all the trouble and time, many turn out ill. Chiquito is a beauty, isn't he? Wind and sun and season.

are all nothing to him. Show him the herd and he will put you within range. He never failed me yet.'

'How do you train them?' I asked.

'Ah, señor! If folks would but give themselves the pains with oxen that is readily devoted to horses, they would soon find which is the cleverer animal of the two. I've been a breeder of different cattle all my life, and I know what can be done with each; and never had I any animal of any kind so intelligent as Chiquito.'

'But how do you know which is likely to turn out cleverest?'

'For mules and horses and cattle, I will answer for it, the most beautiful is the cleverest. As to mankind, I can give no opinion, señor, not knowing much; for my life has passed on lonely savannahs and desolate hills and in silent forests.'

'And how do you train the ox for hunting?'

'Having chosen your two-year-old, you fasten his head to a post. Then, with a short club, in quick strokes, you steadily tap his horns for an hour or so daily. At the end of a couple of months the outer horn gets quite loose, and with a slight wrench might be slipped off. To the horns you now attach reins, and untie the ox from the post. His first movement is to bolt into the forest, but a pull on the sore horns soon stops that ambition. Then he turns round to gore, but a steady haul of one rein forces him straight again. Some, trying to slacken the reins, back upon the driver, and these always turn out the best and cleverest or the most worthless and vicious. Chiquito tried it the moment he felt the cord, and knocked over his peon driver; and I came to the rescue only just in time to save the peon's life and stop Chiquito's flight to the forest. Well, señor, after a day or two the ox gets quiet and answers to the rein. Then he is taught to stand still when jerked, to bend his head, to step evenly, and other little tricks. When his horns have healed, he still answers to the touch on them, though many do forget their education when the pain has gone. Next comes the training after game, when you can judge his cleverness. Some never do but exactly what they are told. Others show all sorts of clever tricks when deer seem frightened. Chiquito will lie down and roll, covering me all the time. He will sidle up against the wind in a way I never taught him, and is keen on hunting as myself. He has killed a "tigre" too, has Chiquito! Ah! here is your camp, caballero. If you would like a tiger hunt to-morrow I will come for you early. Yes? Hasta la mañana entonces!'

Little did that Indian imagine, as he gaily trotted away, what manner of tiger-hunt his next was to be. Nor did I imagine that a remarkably fine jaguar would invite himself to dinner at my hut long before the next day's sunrise.

About dusk I was awoke from a forty-wink doze by a shout just outside the hut. Next instant in dashed my friend the Indian, banging the door to after him, and throwing into its place across the door the heavy bar. Just as he fixed it, and stood panting, with shoulder pressed against the bar, a shock, so heavy that the whole hut quivered, made the door bend. Another followed, then all was still.

I had sprung up the moment the Indian entered, but the scene passed so quickly there had been no time to speak a word. The Indian's appearance was ghastly, and he was trembling all over. The old Guatemala jacket he wore, his leather breeches, and even his boots, were all ripped and cut; his face streamed with black blood from many deep scratches, and perspiration drenched his long ragged hair.

'Gran Dios, man!' I said; 'what is this? What has happened?'

'A black tiger!' he whispered. 'It chased me for hours.'

'Hours! How can that be, man, when you left me barely half-an-hour before sunset?'

'I got up a tree,' continued the Indian, as though not hearing me, 'and waited till the tiger went away. Then I remounted Chiquito——'

'But didn't the jaguar attack Chiquito?' I asked.

'No, señor, it paid no attention to Chiquito; it was after *me*. A black tiger always singles out its victim before leaving ambush, and, although he may strike others down if they get in his way, he always keeps straight for the prey first chosen. He had chosen *me*.'

'And where is Chiquito now?'

'When I had remounted him and gone a short space, I saw the tiger behind me, his head down-pressed and crouching, and his lips twisted back in a grin of rage. So I fled, and the crooked acacia-thorns tore me cruelly as I rushed straight to come to your hut, till Chiquito fell and—— Oh, listen!'

In the deathly silence, while we held our breath, I heard the hard snoring of a jaguar just outside the door. The animal seemed to be rearing himself up against it, and giving gentle pats to the wood with his paws. Then came a sound of

scratching, and the Indian drew his machete. In a few seconds a black paw, armed with crooked claws, was seen working on our side of the door. The Indian gave a downright cut with his heavy machete, and those crooked claws and the paw-front fell into the hut. The jaguar, roaring like savage thunder, threw himself against the door, again and again, in real tiger-like rage. After which came a pause, during which I refreshed my companion with a 'cock-tail.'

I had heard many stories of the jaguar's pertinacity in steadily following up its first idea, and the courage, ingenuity, and patience of the black 'tigre'—an animal much more dreaded than its spotted brother—was notorious; so I felt pretty sure that the enemy outside intended to fight his way in, somehow, and sample the Indian's tough flesh if possible.

'Where is your gun?' I asked the Indian, who stood listening, motionless, looking like a bloody statue with a machete in its right hand.

'The great God knows; I know not. In the acacias perhaps, he replied with melancholy calmness. 'But listen, señor! He is climbing!'

There was a movement now over our heads, a soft rustling upon the thatch, and then a tearing of the thatch itself. So we stood waiting, till a hole was made and a bit of black tiger visible; and I sent a rifle-bullet through what I could see. There was a roar, and a rolling down the sloping roof; and we heard the beast fall heavily to the ground. But nothing seemed to hurt that blessed black tiger.

Again and again he returned to the roof, active as ever. Every time I saw fur I fired, and the jaguar yelled and rolled and tumbled. All night long the fight lasted, and every crack of the hut was tried by the untiring foe. He bounded about the roof, tore the thatch away, received my bullets with roars, rolled off, dashed against the door, tried the walls all round, and then climbed to the roof again. It was warm work.

With the dawn the brute's movements became slower, the attacks gradually grew fainter, and, at length, ceased. When the sun rose we sallied out to meet the beast in the open, and have a fair fight. I wanted to see that plucky black 'tigre' by daylight.

'Are you not anxious about your ox?' I asked, as we walked along, eating our breakfast as we went.

'No, señor. Chiquito, after waiting for a time, if I do not come, will go home to my hut.'

'But if he gets in the way of the jaguar, what then?'

'It will be ill for the tiger, who is now sick. Chiquito will kill him. It will not be the first he has killed.'

Guided by the clouts of blood, we followed the wounded beast's trail for more than a mile. Then we saw Chiquito, standing with lowered head, looking steadily at something in front of him—something I could not make out.

'There is the tiger, señor,' said my companion.

'Where, my friend?' I asked.

'In front of Chiquito, crouched in the grass.'

And so it was. The jaguar was alive, crouching as though for a spring, about half-a-dozen yards from Chiquito's nose. I was just cocking my rifle when stopped by the Indian.

'Wait here,' said he, 'and see.'

The jaguar suddenly made a spring. The ox dodged sideways, and, as the jaguar alighted, Chiquito charged him from the flank, and, with both horns buried in his side, rolled him over, never again to rise.

'That is the second tiger Chiquito has killed,' remarked the Indian proudly, as he rolled up the jaguar's skin and packed it on the back of that remarkable ox.

A week later, at a settlement some few miles distant from the scene of the jaguar-fight, I again met my Indian compadre. He was doing some sort of cattle dealing, but had left Chiquito at home. It happened that just as I was passing a gambling shanty a man rushed out from the door. After a short stare at my face the man seized me by the arm. Unexpected meetings were common enough in those days, along all the Pacific coast; I was not surprised therefore at recognising the man who had seized me. It was Augustus Longhurst, commonly called 'Gassy,' whom I had the pleasure of introducing to the readers of *Fores' Magazine* in a previous sketch (March, 1896).

'Hi, stranger!' said he, thereby showing that he did not recognise me. 'You're a white man, and I've been looking for one ever so long to come and drink along with me. The blazing forty-foot don't seem to taste like civilised cocktail with those yellow-skinned greasers, somehow. So come along, mister. Come and bring me a bit of luck.'

'Now, Gassy,' I responded, 'suppose you take another look at me. How goes it with the B.C. wildfowl?'

'Great golly! Why, it's *you*! They said you'd got scalped down Texas way, and were buried inside of a grizzly in California.'

'They took advantage of your well-known trustful disposition,' I told him, as he led me into the windowless shanty, where the national game was being played in the national manner.

On a plain board counter at the door end sat the padrone and his wife, cross-legged, keeping within their reach sundry square bottles of 'Ginevra' and long-necked flasks of 'aguardiente.' At the other end was a table at which sat an old man, guarded on either side by a brawny ruffian armed with machete and knife. Furniture there was none. The floor, simply sandy earth, was strewn with empty bottles and cigar fragments. Half-a-dozen long thin candles lit up about the worst lot of villainous faces I ever saw in my life, and the place was full.

From the dark half-breed and insolent-looking mulatto, to the yellow-haired pale-faced German, every variety of colour was represented in the crowd of gamblers. There was the 'gandin' uncomfortably grand in black broadcloth and chimney-pot hat, and the stalwart 'peon' with broad-leafed Panama and loose drawers rolled above the knee. The air was thick and hazy with smoke and liquor-fumes, which poured out from the door in volumes. It was hot as hades, and sultry curses rolled up to heaven in an unbroken stream.

Dragging me along with him, Gassy crushed his way to the table, upon which lay four cards surrounded by little piles of gold and silver. The banker glanced up sharply, fixed his eyes upon me curiously, bowed slightly, and bent over the cards again. Placing an ounce of gold upon the table, Gassy leaned forward with intense eagerness to mark the turning of the cards. He quite understood the art of cheating.

'Do you watch the hatch of your chickens as close, señor?' asked one of the grim guardians of the bank, as the banker calmly turned the cards and Gassy's stake was lost.

'Great thunder! What a run of luck!' gasped Gassy. 'That darned old cuss seems to have struck considerable ile. That's the last blessed cent I own in the world. I'd just like to have a muss for the dollars before I go, and—eh? What?'

The last words were addressed to a tall lithe-looking bearded Texan, a type of wild Bohemian to whom life—his own or another's—is of less value than a charge of powder. Barely ten words were exchanged. Quick as thought Gassy stretched an arm across the table and seized the cards from the banker's hand. Like lightning the banker drew a pistol and fired; but the Texan dashed the table against his body, and the

ball struck a priest standing just behind. The candles were stamped out in an instant, and a rush made for the door. Amidst fierce clashing of steel three almost simultaneous pistol-shots cracked, and two bodies fell prone. Wound in the Texan's wiry arms was the little old banker, furiously struggling, while his protectors—the two bank bullies—were at bay before Gassy's pistol.

'Cl'ar the door there—cl'ar the door!' shouted the Texan, in a voice that rang out high above din of clanging steel, furious yells, and frightened cries. 'The cards are waxed! Let me get out with the old thief into the open! By the eternal, if you don't cl'ar the way I'll crush his ribs in!'

A few seconds later, the Texan, with the banker in his arms, Gassy, myself, and a machete-armed Indian, stood together in the road, the centre of a circle of savage faces and flashing machetes. Not all were hostile, for many had lost heavily, and most would have welcomed a chance of robbing the bank. But the banker knew his customers.

'A thousand dollars to the man who frees me,' he panted, ending in an awful shriek. The Texan had crushed him in a bear-like hug, and now dropped the limp body from those terrible arms on to the ground, where the banker lay feebly moaning.

'Here are the cards; come and see them for yourselves!' shouted Gassy. 'The faces are waxed all over. See! I can stick two together and turn up just what I darned please.'

'Es verdad!' called out the Indian beside me. 'Don Juan has cheated.' I turned and looked at the man. 'Buenos dias, señor,' he drawled; 'it is a warm evening just now, is it not?' And behold, it was my compadre of the jaguar-fight, the owner of the wonderful Chiquito. At the moment I was about to answer, a dozen peons dashed at the prostrate banker.

'Give us back our money!' they yelled.

'No, yer don't!' cried the Texan, standing across the banker's body. 'We'll fix matters more reasonable fair than that. These two caballeros, with two of you, shall count his money first, and then we'll divide.'

But matters were not so easily arranged. One of the bank bullies, with half-a-dozen peons, pushed to the front.

'Those are not Don Juan's cards; they are your own, you Yankee mule!' shouted the bank ruffian. 'Don Juan Zumbado is well known to be a good sportsman, and never a word was

ever heard spoken against his honour. He is a member of Congress, and he can pay those that help him, and avenge himself on those who do him injury. Amigos! will you let these filibusters murder your countrymen in your very sight? Don Juan has offered a thousand dollars a-piece to all who help him, and he will honourably pay. Come on then! Death to the filibusters!

The ruffian's eloquence evidently convinced the yelling crew as to the side upon which lay their interest, but the muzzles of our pistols stopped their noisy rush.

'The talking caballero has a machete, and a fine large one it is,' said my Indian compadre, stepping to the front and facing the bully. 'I also have my machete. If the caballero can fight as well as talk, let the matter be so settled between him and me. It is the way that is most simple and the most quick. Is it not so?'

'No,' cried the Texan. 'Twas me as begun the muss, an' I guess it's me as should put it through. If that yaller-head has the pluck of a coyote, he'll fight it out with *me*, fair and squar. Look hyar, hombres,' he called to the crowd in Spanish, 'this caballero an' me don't spice together in our notions exactly. What then? I've allurs heerd that you countrymen here was notably distinguished by your love of fair play an' a perticularly nice regard for manly vertoo. Well, hombres, just oblige me with the loan of a machete, an' that bully yaller-head an' me'll settle all outstandin' diff'rences so quick as you shan't see!'

This proposition, common enough in those parts, was received with a cheer. A dozen weapons were instantly offered, and in a minute or so the champions stood opposite one another, armed with the guardless sword called a 'machete,' in the centre of a large fairly-formed ring. And the crowd grew hushed.

The tall Texan stood square and firm, holding the weapon from his body in a hanging guard. The other took the cramped half-crouching attitude usually chosen by his countrymen in such a case, his machete along his right thigh and his left arm wrapped in a thick cloak.

Warily, for full five minutes, they moved about without striking a blow. Then, quick as a pistol-flash, the cloak-guarded arm was thrust on to the point of the Texan's weapon, and a furious lunge from the hip almost pierced his body. But the Texan was too old a fighter to be thus taken unawares. Too many times had he seen a countryman so entrapped by

the wily swordsmen of the South. He expected this very play when taking the hanging guard. Jerking his machete back free from the cloak by a sharp twist of his elbow, he swept the weapon round in a parry delivered with all his force. His antagonist, thrown off his balance by the weight of the blow, stumbled forward, and the Texan's sword swung through the air and cut down deep into his neck and throat. He dropped his machete and fell upon one knee; then, like a tiger, he sprang up, and, heedless of a thrust that pierced his chest, buried a knife in the Texan's heart. This knife had been concealed in the folds of the villain's cloak. The champions fell together, dead.

* * * * *

The short twilight of the tropics settled down upon the hills, soft mists began to rise and creatures of darkness to appear, as we three—Gassy, I, and my Indian compadre—dug the poor Texan's grave. Flat-winged and noiseless, like enormous butterflies, night-hawks floated around our heads and alighted almost at our feet; and weirdly and ghostlike they took wing again when about to be stepped upon. Here and there, amongst dusky boughs, glinted a lonely firefly, flashing and waning. A gentle wind sighed over the land as in silence we laid the body to rest, and in silence departed; for in that enlightened country the heretic is denied Christian sepulture.

'They say the bank had won over five-and-twenty ounces,' observed Gassy, over his after-supper pipe.

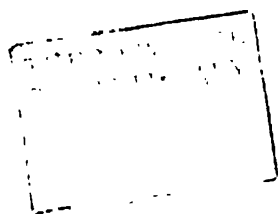
'Three men were killed stone dead, and three dangerously wounded,' I remarked, 'which gives rather more than twenty pounds a piece for a life, and ten pounds for a dangerous wound. That's about the market price, I suppose.'

'And not a bad price as things go if it's cash down,' said Gassy. 'But in this case nobody gets paid, for the thief of a banker wriggled himself off during the fight.'

'Well,' said I, 'it's a wretched end to die in a rowdy fight and be buried in a ditch.' And that was the poor Texan's most sympathetic epitaph.



A black paw
on our Side of the door



THE HUMOROUS SIDE OF FOX-HUNTING.

By FRANK L. W. WEDGE.



FOXES must be preserved, you know,' or otherwise there could be no hunting; and one of the earliest secretaries I can recall, of any established Hunt Poultry Fund, had that axiom printed at the top of his note-paper beneath a device consisting of a jam-pot with a fox's mask depicted over-looking its upper rim.

Previous even to that period, however, amounts were paid by M. F. H.'s, or others, in settlement of claims sent in by aggrieved persons. In one instance, a master of hounds received for three consecutive years a bill, from the same individual, for ten geese, for the loss or absence of which the foxes were held responsible!

Struck by the fact that the claim was made out in precisely the same form, and for the same sum each year, our master thought it advisable to inquire, from a neighbour of the claimant, as to the authenticity of his demands.

The reply was somewhat startling, and as follows: 'Lor, bless yer, sir, he ain't had no geese whatever, to my knowledge, for these two years!'

Armed with this information, the delinquent was in due course called upon by his assumed debtor, who not unreasonably, although civilly, taxed him with making a false statement.

Quite unabashed, however, the farmer defended his position thus: 'Well, sir, that shall be true, and I've no wish to deceive a gentleman like you, but the fact is that my missus allus did have ten geese, and the fox allus took 'em, so I thought it would be all the same to you if you paid, and there could be little or no harm in our avoiding the first outlay.'

Farmers as a rule, however, are the most honourable of men, and in addition the best of good fellows, as those who have lived country lives and mixed much amongst them will readily admit. But in every flock there are some specimens the wool of which is not up to the recognised standard, as in every pack some few individual hounds may not be actually straight.

So it is with agriculturists, as a few examples will, I think, make evident.

A farmer dropped one day into a neighbour's house at dinner-time, and was asked to join the family circle, and he did so; but expressed surprise, when seeing a fine turkey on the table, at his neighbour's extravagance. 'Oh,' was the rejoinder, 'don't you make no mistake, friend, there ain't no cause to fret; *the Hunt will pay for that.*' The guest told an acquaintance of my own afterwards, that he never felt so ashamed to eat his dinner in his life; but the unrepentant sinner and his accessories, in the base misdemeanour they had practised, doubtless enjoyed theirs!

Another recent instance of dishonesty was accidentally discovered by a hunt secretary when visiting a claimant's house in order to discharge his duties, and a poultry bill.

The claim was for fifteen couple of fowls fit for table, and for which full market price was charged. Unfortunately for the applicant, he and his wife were, however, that day from home; so the secretary, after finding such to be the case, inquired of a plough-boy whether he knew anything about the fowls Mr. and Mrs. Swindlem had lost, and if so, their number.

'Or,' said the youth (and that word has many meanings in yokel life), 'they's lost fifteen!'

'Hens or chickens?' asked the secretary.

'Chickens,' replied Hodge.

'How large—half-grown?' continued the questioner.

'Half-grown—no-a—about the size of my fist!'—That claim was not, I believe, paid in full.

Another farmer and his wife swore a fox had killed a lamb, and the former had sent in a bill to the same painstaking secretary for its value. Unfortunately, however, it was a young dog of the said secretary's which had killed it when crossing their farm some time previously, so all their hard swearing was to no purpose, although they averred they had padded the fox to the spot and even *smelt* him! The secretary, in fact, showed them the dog that had done the deed, paid personally for the lamb, and regretted that stress of business had prevented him from doing so earlier (as he had intended), and that his negligence had caused them to expose so fully the elasticity of their consciences!

Enough on this head; but the above anecdotes if not written down *precisely* as the incidents occurred, are sufficiently correct to be accepted as—to the best of the writer's belief—reliable in substance, if not in every detail.

‘Why,’ some one once remarked, ‘do masters of hounds when they assume that office, think it essential to their new status to no longer behave like gentlemen?’

That is a sweeping statement which, of course, will not be endorsed by any one—least of all, by the writer, who can vouch for the general courtesy of the majority, even under the most irritating of all circumstances, to lovers of sport, who are anxious to show it to their followers.

There are, however, exceptions, and even the most placid of M.F.H.’s may, by a thrusting or ignorant member of his field, be driven to use language he would not tolerate in his own smoking-room, although at the time the lady he respects most of any in the world may be within hearsay. Within hearsay, on such occasions—my readers are, I am sure, aware—often too embraces a widish area!

Some of the following are old saws, reached down from the storehouse of memory, and others of more recent date; but to the writer’s sense of humour they appeal, if not to that of his readers. ‘I did not *come out* here to be d——d, sir,’ was the retort of a gentleman at whom the master had been swearing; but he received no consolation from the latter’s rejoinder, ‘Then *go home* and be d——d, sir!’

On the other hand, a soft answer is reputed to turn away wrath, and in this case it, at all events, checked its further expression.

A farmer at whom an M. F. H. had made a dead set for heading a fox, using language on the occasion my editor would not pass were I to pen it, completely nonplussed the latter by saying blandly:

‘Well, my lord, if I couldn’t swear better than that, I should be ashamed of myself!’

Another good M. F. H. who used strong language not only to erring members of his field, but also pretty systematically to his servants, once, after slating a whipper-in, turned to a friend with the remark, ‘I believe that fellow’s deaf as well as blind.’ The reply he got was, ‘Not the least surprised if he’s blind, for you’ve d——d his eyes every day to my knowledge; but you do the lad an injustice to assume he’s deaf.’

On another occasion, he was neatly brought to book by a friend with whom he was dining. ‘Why, B., do you always call all your servants d——d fools? You’ll excuse my asking you, but people naturally assume that you yourself must be some-

thing of the sort, or you would not otherwise employ so many as your servants !'

'So he's been a-dressing you down again, Bill, ain't he?' was the semi-sympathetic remark made by a young second horse-man in a hunt establishment to an older and more logical one, who replied :

'Well, what if he has? He pays us well, don't he?'

On a frosty, doubtful morning, a well-known horse-dealer volunteered the advice to those around to—if the master decided to throw off—'ride where the 'erbage is longest, because it's safer.'

'How brutal of you, then, to cut it so short,' was the rejoinder from an outsider; 'but I suppose it's good for your trade?'

An impertinent youth on another occasion, with unwarrantable familiarity addressed an old member of the field with whom he was but slightly acquainted thus :

'Which is my best way 'ome to Mudbury, Brown?'

'Why don't you call me Frank, old fellow?' replied Mr. Francis Brown, scoring at the same time 'game,' to the amusement of all those at hand, except, and rightly, the first discomfited speaker.

Apart from such by-play as I have related, the humours of the hunting field are always greatly further and daily enhanced, by men with 'firm hands and light seats,' 'hard funkens' (as the late Mr. Bromley Davenport so aptly styled a class from which no hunt is wholly exempt), and others.

In fact, although we all go out for sport, and to see it in the way we elect to try to, according to our individual mounts, nerves, and tastes—I have endeavoured here to point out, that—there is also a humorous side to things appertaining to the Chase, which is much too good to be missed by any who have an appreciative sense of it.

Hounds can't always run well, and coverts may sometimes be tenantless, but the sense of humour one possesses will carry him through the day happily enough; whereas another, who looks at the whole affair in a sterner light (although no keener or better sportsman in reality) makes himself disagreeably cross and does nothing whatever (rather the contrary) to lighten the disappointment under which from unforeseen circumstances all are forced to undergo. Some of the best sportsmen hunt on foot and some of the worst on horseback, we all know, but of

the latter very few would acknowledge that they only hunt because it is fashionable, and that they in reality are most uncomfortable throughout each day—although in some cases it is a fact—and *some onlookers* fully recognise it as such.

It would, in reality, be a capital thing if at any meet of fox-hounds a master had the power to redistribute the mounts amongst his field. There is old Money-bags, for instance, with perhaps three horses out, and all uncomfortably fresh, who has no intention whatever of risking his neck over a sheep-hurdle on the one hand ; whilst, on the other, is Poverty on a screw quite incapable of carrying him where he would like to be and could be placed if decently mounted ; and, in such cases, each would be the better for a change of horses. But, as that can't be done, the man with a sense of humour takes his pleasure out of *both*. The one, when hounds find, is probably being run away with down a road, or round a ploughed field, and the other is meanwhile equally hardly employed in endeavouring not to wholly lose touch with the hounds he loves to see run, on a doubtful jumper and possibly a roarer to boot !

Apart, then, from fox-hunting being the best of all sports, there is a lot of fun to be got out of it by all who participate therein ; and for long years yet to come may its best supporters—our sport-loving farmers—give it the hearty welcome they generally concede to it, and have done for so long. The cases of imposition in poultry claims, which I have at the commencement of this paper referred to, are, I am sure, few and far between ; but I cannot, I fear, say that the impostors—sportsmen in name only—who intermingle with better men in the hunting-field, are by any means equally exceptional.

A slight knowledge of agriculture, and also a knowledge and timely recollection that in the hunting-field all meet on an equal footing, would do much to thin the ranks of such, or rather increase those of more agreeable colleagues—for money has little weight here, although useful and necessary on the subscribers' list, to which, unfortunately, the most able do not usually contribute proportionately most liberally.

CROWDS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS.

By F. W. PARKER.

THERE are two problems, intimately connected with each other, which are every year demanding greater attention from certain masters of hounds and hunt committees. They are : How to keep down crowds? and, How to regulate subscriptions?

In years gone by, in those now, alas! almost prehistoric times, there might often have arisen difficulties about subscriptions, but there never was any question of danger to sport through overcrowding. And this remains very much the position of unfashionable packs at the present time. With them there is no question of competition.

In a country where sixty or seventy sportsmen represent an average field, there is plenty of room for a stranger or two ; and, should any stranger appear at the meet, the first thought in the Master's mind will be, that he is pleased to see him ; and not the unsportsmanlike but, alas! inevitable thought, 'Has he subscribed?' dislike to seeing any addition to the crowd naturally seeking its own remedy.

Here, then, there is no question of crowding. And, as for subscriptions, there is a certain *necessary* amount to be raised, every one ought to give his fair share towards the expenses, and he who fails in this, is doing neither more nor less than enjoying his sport at the expense of others, over whom he has no sort of claim.

But what constitutes his fair share ? There will always be a few chief supporters of the hunt who, fortunately, have other standards to regulate their contributions by, but, putting them aside, for the rank and file of the hunt, for those who wish to do what is right, but whose purses won't allow them to do much more, the usual standard is the number of hunters each man keeps. And, *cæteris paribus*, this is probably the best guide available. But men must take care that 'other things' *are* 'equal;' and a man who lives in London, and only comes down to the country to hunt, must not flatter himself that he is doing his duty, because he subscribes the same as another sportsman, who also keeps two horses, when the 'other fellow' owns a cover, in which he does his best to preserve foxes—at the expense of his pheasants—walks one or more puppies, and allows his

land to be ridden over, and his fences broken down, without complaint.

A stranger, on going down to a new country, if he knows that he can't afford to be generous, but wishes to do what is right (don't forget to be generous if you can be), can't do better than consult the Secretary of the Hunt; and every secretary ought to be prepared to give a stranger a line to go by in fixing his subscription.

As to the actual sum to be given per horse, I should like to point out that the above-mentioned standard only relates to the proportion in which each man should pay; the actual amount of his subscription will, or should, depend on the sum that has to be raised, in addition to the subscriptions of the aforesaid chief supporters, to complete the total subscription promised to the Master. So it will be seen that the actual sum per horse might vary considerably, though in practice it will generally be found to be five or ten pounds per horse.

And here one word to those too numerous, unfortunate, committees who seem to be always a trifle in debt. Fashion decrees that hunt subscriptions must be graduated into a scale of five-pound notes. A man gives either five, ten, or fifteen pounds, &c.; no one thinks of giving seven or eleven, and, if asked to increase his subscription, he feels he is being asked to give another five pounds at least, which he does grudgingly, or not at all. And this shows the mistake of the system. For the same man would be only too pleased to give an extra ten shillings, or sovereign, to help to make up a deficit. Why can't secretaries send round a circular to every member of the hunt, to say that there is a debt of 100*l.*, or whatever it may be, and that a donation of ten shillings or a pound a head will clear it off, and that he hopes every member will send him his sovereign? I am sure every member would. A man will always give a small sum, especially if he feels that every one else is doing the same, and that he is not being asked to do more than his share.

There is, indeed, a limit beyond which men will not increase their subscriptions by five shillings even. But, when you have reached that limit, it is about time to shut up shop. Don't be afraid however, the time is not yet; for, believe me, the majority of men who hunt, if it came to be really a question of giving up their hunting, or *doubling* their present subscriptions, would find that they could manage to do the latter. If a man

can afford to spend 150*l.* a year on keeping two hunters, he will contrive, somehow, to give twenty pounds a year, instead of ten, to the hunt funds, if he is convinced that it is necessary, so miserably low at present is the ratio between subscriptions and the sums spent on everything else connected with hunting.

All this is comparatively straightforward work.

It is when we turn to the well-named 'fashionable' countries, and find ourselves on the grass, and within easy reach of London, that the problem becomes more complicated.

O Fashion, you have much to answer for. Oh, if it were only 'the thing' to hunt from home!

More than half a fashionable field would be quite as happy, or happier, in a plough country, provided they were *all* there. Oh, for some leader of society to pilot the crowd on to the plough, and leave the grass for those who really want to hunt; to see hounds work, and a fox fairly killed; who love the glorious grass, because it carries a scent, and over it they can follow hounds running on from field to field, on many a frosty morning, when, over ploughs that would 'carry,' scent would vanish, hounds be at fault, horses pulled up, and all alike disappointed.

Such must often be the thought of some one of the right sort, crowded out in the first gateway, from his chance of a start in the rattling forty minutes *he* would have had the instinct and nerve to have enjoyed so well.

Such, too, must often be the feeling of the exasperated Master, when he sees a gallant fox which had set his mask straight for the open, in a direction which meant a five-mile point before he could touch the nearest cover of any size, headed back by some stragglers of the long line of second horse-men, to be chopped in cover, or lost over foiled ground. Or it may be that the fox has got well away with a scent, good enough provided hounds are given a fair chance, and all is going merry as a marriage bell, when, as they dwell and then swing to the right, hounds encounter some dozen of the hard-riding division, who have ridden over the line, and just made it impossible for them to puzzle out the scent, with the result that valuable time is lost, and the chance of pushing and killing the fox seriously diminished. Very likely some of these hard-riding gentlemen would be too forward under any circumstances; but where there are so many, comparatively, who mean to be first, the temptation to look at your neighbour, and not at the hounds,

is great. And when, with the best intentions, you know that your best or only chance of keeping with hounds, if they do run on, is to be over one of the only two possible places in the fence in front of you, before the crowd assails it in force, you are rather naturally inclined to chance it, and get forward at all risks.

So much by way of illustration, though the evils of an unmanageable crowd out hunting, as elsewhere, are but too obvious.

To resume. It is when we come to the grass that the real difficulty arises. For mixed up with the question of what a man should subscribe is the other question of how to limit your field and keep out undesirable members—undesirable, that is, because you have no room for them. It is not a mere question of how much they are prepared to subscribe. For when you have already got a big field, and sufficient funds to carry on the hunt, and do the thing well, fresh comers can't be anything but a nuisance in the eyes of all good sportsmen.

For the present, perhaps, a properly regulated and strictly enforced scale of subscriptions might suffice to keep the fields within a manageable compass, as undoubtedly it would ensure a sum of money ample for all purposes.

But there will soon come a day—even if it has not already dawned for some—when the scale of subscriptions will have been raised to a limit, beyond which it will be impossible to go without overtaking your present subscribers, or, with seeming injustice, establishing a higher scale for new-comers. And even then, mind you, you will have no guarantee that you won't have far too large a crowd out for a reasonable chance of sport, with an unnecessary surplus of money as your only compensation; and what is to happen then?

The first step should be to determine whom to try to exclude. And, presumably, your wish will be to restrict the field as far as possible to those who have the best right to be there. But what constitutes a valid 'right to be there?' First and foremost, every landowner and every tenant must be welcome at the cover-side, whether they pay a subscription or not; this is a matter of courtesy, a matter of good policy and common prudence; for, without their consent and goodwill, hunting would not be. They are the hosts, and the rest of us are the guests—and self-invited guests too—remember! Then, surely, as things now are, the only other right is the one bought by hard cash—the man who pays the most, has the best right to be there. But, as

we have seen, it is highly undesirable to carry this qualification too far ; so we are working in a circle, and are no 'forrader.'

In fact, it seems that no permanent improvement is possible, as long as things are as they are at present ; let us consider some possible changes in these same 'things.'

What is wanted is greater distribution ; and this may be automatic, carried out on the initiative of the sporting public themselves ; or, if not, then compulsory, revolutionary—the work of the Hunt committees.

The first of these two ways would undoubtedly be the best ; and it would be easily accomplished. It would mean that more men would hunt from home ; and for those who have a place of their own in the country there are many advantages ; or, if you find your own country quite hopeless, choose some pack—and, thank goodness, at present there are many such—with whom, though brilliant 'Belvoir bursts' may be lacking, yet sterling good hunts come galore, where you will find that you have plenty of room at your fences, that your money will be useful, and your society appreciated.

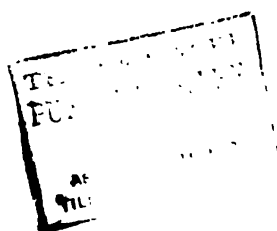
And one word more of encouragement. As the fall in the price of wheat has turned many strips of country that were formerly nothing but the stickiest plough into a delightful stretch of grass, so, too, the fact that barley or oats—spring-sown corn—has so largely taken the place of wheat in the farmer's rotation, means that so many more fields are left down to 'seeds' during the winter, so that now about two-thirds of the land, in an average plough country is under grass—permanent or seeds—for a great part of the season.

Bearing in mind some such considerations as these, there is a chance that more men, whose object in going hunting is to hunt, may begin to look out for some fairish country, where there is no crowd. But who shall venture to offer advice to fashion ? The crowd rejoices in itself ; and shall any argument persuade the units to forego the pleasure of being one of the fashionable gathering, in the interest of mere sport ?

The conclusion, then, that we reluctantly arrive at is that, before long, committees will have to take some strong steps to protect themselves against the ever-increasing crowd. And, if we decide that it cannot be done by an unlimited increase of subscriptions, then the only other way will be for the members of the hunt, who already have a prescriptive right to belong, to form themselves into a regular club, with an exclusive right



"Jack, I'll change horses with you."



to hunt in the country. The club would be run on the lines of any social club ; its numbers would be strictly limited, and new members only admitted when vacancies occurred, or it was thought advisable to increase their number.

It is doubtful, perhaps, whether the mere arbitrary assumption of a right over a certain country would be recognised by the sporting public ; and, if not, then finally the committee must obtain this right, in a legal form, from the landowners, and perhaps pay them a substantial return, in the shape of a hunting rent. Threepence per acre would mean about 3000*l.* a year in a good-sized country ; and, if subscriptions were anything like proportionate to the rest of hunting expenditure, there would be no difficulty in finding the money ; and then you would be masters of the situation.

To thoroughly discuss the feasibility of any such scheme, to set forth the pros and cons, the advantages and difficulties, would furnish matter enough for a fresh article, which I will leave for some other pen, perhaps, to write. And here I will end, with a pious prayer that it may be many years yet before any such expedient has to be resorted to, and a hope that what I have written may perchance influence some to put their hands a little deeper into their pockets, where funds are needed ; and a few to place the interests of sport before the craze of being fashionable, and to do their part in the much-needed, greater distribution of the sporting element.

A CONSIDERATE HEIR-PRESUMPTIVE.

By GEORGE F. UNDERHILL.

NO be forced to remain in London during the November fogs, when your heart is in the hunting-field, is, to say the least of it, irritating under any circumstances. But when you have been seduced into purchasing three hunters at Tattersall's, in October, and have to pay livery-stable charges in order that the brutes may eat their heads off, the irritability merges into partial madness. Such, at all events, was my case. I possessed an uncle from whom I had expectations, and who insisted upon my dancing attendance upon him whenever and wherever he chose to call

the tune. As disobedience meant disinheritance, I was bound to yield to his whims. I have heard Radical candidates for Parliamentary honours preach that we should never sacrifice our independence; but I don't know of one who has been called upon to sacrifice an independence of two thousand a year. If such a person exists, who has made the sacrifice, he should lend out his morality on the hire system, to be repaid by infinitesimal instalments, always provided that he could find any customers.

This whim of my uncle to have me within beck and call always occurred, when he had an attack of gout. He would spend the morning in swearing at his valet—which was a good thing, since, by the time that I arrived for luncheon, he had blown off a certain amount of superfluous steam. Indeed, when his language in the forenoon had been unusually strong, I have known him to be almost affable at luncheon. At one time I used to bribe Snips, his valet, to irritate him in the morning. Snips would accept the bribe, but as he generally failed to fulfil his part of the transaction, I made other arrangements, and only paid him by results, at the end of the afternoon, when I left to dress for dinner.

‘Only five shillings’ worth to-day, Snips, and dear at that.’

‘Why, sir, I actually stumbled against his foot while I was shaving him, and his language——’

‘Never mind the language! Drop the hot coffee on his foot to-morrow, and see what that will do.’

‘Very good, sir.’

The hot coffee had a good effect, for on the next day—the day on which this story opens—my uncle was quite cheerful.

‘Much better, Jack, much better,’ he said, in response to my usual inquiry. ‘I’ve had a letter from my old friend, Colonel Bludger. You know him, the Master of the Yellowmoor Hounds. Fancy Bludger an M.F.H.! Why, Jack, when he was a subaltern he couldn’t ride better than you can. Well, Bludger wants me to stay with him for a bit; thinks I want rousing up, and all that sort of thing. I hope you won’t be dull without me, Jack?’

‘I shall miss you, sir, of course,’ I replied, dutifully; ‘but I also have an invitation into the Yellowmoor country, from an old college acquaintance of mine, a Mr. Castlecroft. He is a nephew of Lord Medhurst, and has a little hunting-box on the Medhurst estate. So, if you accept Colonel Bludger’s invitation,

I will go down and visit my friend, so that, if you should require me, I shall be in the neighbourhood.'

'Very good arrangement! We'll go down to-morrow. Nothing like taking time by the forelock. Ring the bell, and I'll give Snips the orders. Snips understands railway travelling, though he is a born idiot in most things. Cut me shaving this morning, and then spilt a cup of scalding coffee over my foot.'

Five shillings for cut, five shillings for coffee, makes ten, I thought; but a look which Snips gave me after he had received his instructions, told me plainer than words that he expected a sovereign.

To send a wire to my chum, Jimmy Castlecroft, give the necessary orders at the livery stables about my horses, and get together my kit, was not an arduous task even to me, who detest hurry; and I was waiting on the platform at Paddington when my uncle arrived the next morning. The prospect of his visit had made him look ten years younger, or perhaps it was his clothes. I congratulated him on his juvenile appearance, and the old gentleman actually blushed. I couldn't understand it then, though I do now.

'Surprised to see me in breeches and gaiters, eh, Jack? We must do in Rome as Rome does. Gad, sir, I'll show you the way across the Yellowmoor country! You youngsters think that you can ride, but—oh, confound the boot!'

I followed my uncle into the carriage which had been engaged for us in a state of amazement. If he had not been my uncle I should have been amused; as it was I had doubts about his sanity. When a gentleman of seventy has been confined to his rooms with gout for some weeks, and within twenty-four hours appears in the regulation country costume of a young man prepared for a long railway journey, there must be something which does not meet the eye. The stolid countenance of Snips, as he arranged rugs, papers, and other impedimenta of travelling, gave me no clue as to the reason of this mysterious change. Nor was I further enlightened when we were fairly started, for my uncle during the first half-hour did nothing but chuckle behind a paper, which he held upside down. Nor did he deign to speak till we reached Oxford, where, by the forethought of Snips, a luncheon basket, with hot chops and a bottle of champagne, was handed into the carriage.

'Must have fuel to keep the engine going, Jack. Draw the cork, my boy! I'm tired of weak whiskey and water. What

I want is something to put life into me. Fresh air and a gallop after hounds, those are the things to set one up! I wonder if old Bludger has got anything worth riding! But you have, I suppose?’

‘I am afraid, sir, that my three corks are rather nasty beasts to manage. You see, I can’t afford to buy made hunters.’

‘Then I’ll make them for you, Jack. Ah! my boy, you should be thankful that you have an uncle to help you.’

‘So I am, sir.’ This was the truth, so far as financial help was concerned. Stern moralists may stigmatise me as an idler, waiting to step into a dead man’s shoes; but that, of course, is petty jealousy. The truth is that I was a philanthropist, doing my best to make the last days of an old gentleman happy; so I allowed my venerable relative to ramble on to his heart’s content till we reached Yellowmoor Station, when I handed him over to the tender mercies of Snips, who deposited him in Colonel Bludger’s brougham.

Jimmy Castlecroft had come to meet me, and it did not take long to see my gees safely unboxed and my belongings stowed away in the luggage cart.

‘Who is the old fogey who travelled down with you, and went away in old Bludger’s Noah’s ark?’ Jimmy asked, as we bowled along at a good twelve miles an hour to Medhurst Lodge. I explained everything, including my astonishment at my uncle’s sudden juvenile appearance.

‘The avuncular relative did not show you Bludger’s invitation, did he?’

‘No. Why the dickens should he?’

‘Why the dickens shouldn’t he? Jack, my boy, your native wit has deserted you. You surely don’t imagine that that elaborate get-up is for the sake of Colonel Bludger? Have you forgotten Nellie Bludger? You used to rave about her at one time.’

‘But she married an Austrian count years ago.’

‘And a year ago the said Austrian count lost his fortune and shot himself at Monte Carlo. Nellie is now the Countess Fuchs, and keeps house for the Colonel. I don’t pretend to guess what sort of a step-aunt she would make, but she is as handsome and as big a flirt as ever. All the fellows down here are mad about her, and she could pick and choose from the whole county. They say that she leads her father an awful life, and that the old boy would like to give her away a second time. But Nellie is

artful, and has a keen eye to the main chance, which means a good establishment and permission to do as she pleases. Now even such an excellent dry-nurse as you have been would stand no earthly chance against an old man's darling.'

'Jimmy, are you serious?'

'Never more serious in my life. But isn't it fun?'

'It may be fun to you, but it doesn't tickle my sense of humour.'

'Great Scott, man, you must be blind!' If it isn't fun to watch a gouty old gentleman making love, then I don't know what fun is.'

'I don't think it is much fun to watch an elderly relative making a fool of himself. I'll go to the Lunacy Commissioners and have the old dotard locked up before I'll allow him to make himself miserable for life. No, Jimmy; I should never forgive myself if I saw my dear uncle unhappy in his old age.'

I considered this to be an expression of dutiful morality, such as a hero in melodrama would utter; but it was lost upon Jimmy—he only closed his left eye.

'Then, Jack, you must make love to the Countess yourself.'

'It was, perhaps, fortunate that Jimmy made this remark just as we arrived at Medhurst Lodge, for my temper had been upset. However, afternoon tea—or rather the bachelor substitute for it—and an inspection of the stables put me in a better humour, and, knowing Jimmy's tendency to chaff, I concluded that he had been trying to get a rise out of me. The whole affair was too preposterous. So, after a good dinner and a prolonged worship of the goddess Nicotine, I slept the sleep of those who are at peace with all mankind. Nor did my confidence abate in the morning as we trotted to a favourite meet of the Yellowmoor Hounds. I knew that my get-up was irreproachable, and the new purchase that I was riding seemed to justify the encomiums which Mr. Tattersall had passed upon him. Briefly, I was on good terms with myself; but my paradise was short-lived.

'Good morning, Mr. Sturgeon! Have you forgotten an old friend?'

I turned suddenly round. There was the Countess, and by her side, mounted on a fiddle-headed cob, was my uncle! Poor old man! How I did pity him!

'You see, Mr. Sturgeon, that I have taken your uncle in hand. I mean to cure him. I told Dad, when we heard that he

was suffering from his old enemy, that we must have him down at Yellowmoor, and cheer him up. Now, Mr. Sturgeon, how could he get well in lonely chambers with nobody to talk to? You might look him up occasionally for an hour or two, when you were in town; but, as I said to Dad, the best medicine in the world is lively society. Don't you agree with me?'

'Certainly,' I replied, in a tone which I intended to be sarcastic. 'Then I presume that Colonel Bludger is entertaining a house party?'

'No; there are only ourselves. Good morning, Mr. Castlecroft. So you have got Mr. Sturgeon staying with you. You must come over and dine with us *en famille*. Will to-morrow suit you?'

Jimmy readily accepted the invitation; and, as the hounds were moving off to draw their first covert, further conversation was stopped. I watched my uncle narrowly. The Countess was now surrounded by a phalanx of pink coats, which I presume covered the men who were mad about her; though as far as I could see she was impartial in the distribution of her favours. But for the time, at all events, she had deserted my uncle, so I determined to speak to him, while the coast was clear. The neglect of the Countess had evidently made him sulky, and the momentary twinges in his face testified that he was suffering the agonies of gout.

'My dear uncle, excuse me, but you don't look well. Is it wise to exert yourself so much after your painful attack?'

'Confound it, boy! Do you think I am made of sugar? I am as hale and hearty as ever I was in my life. What Bludger meant by mounting me on this bathing-machine quadruped, I can't understand. Jack, I'll change horses with you.'

'I'm afraid that my gee is a perfect demon.'

'Because you don't know how to ride him. Now then, be slippy! I mean to teach that parcel of idiots, who are fooling round the Countess Fuchs, how to pilot her. Grand woman, the Countess, Jack, eh?'

'You seem to take quite a paternal interest in her, sir.'

'Only sympathy, Jack, only sympathy. Hem! that will do. You can take that brute back to Bludger's stables. See you to-morrow evening at dinner.' And my uncle cantered off to covert-side to overtake the Countess, leaving me with the fiddle-headed cob. I did not take that beast back to Colonel

Bludger's stables ; for, even if I killed the brute, I felt it to be my duty to see that my dear uncle did not come to grief. Besides, I took an interest in the welfare of my own horse. Therefore, I pounded along on the fiddle-headed cob, to the first covert. I had often seen in print that expression 'pounding along,' but I had never previously defined it by personal experience. I am afraid that I and Colonel Bludger's cob bore a strong resemblance to a cockney and a donkey on Margate sands. Unfortunately, during this pounding process, I came across the last man I wished to meet, namely, Colonel Bludger, to whom I explained the change of horses.

'Wonderfully young man for his age, your uncle, Sturgeon ! I shouldn't be surprised if he lived to be a hundred, if he takes care of himself. He was only talking last night about marrying and settling down.'

'I'm afraid matrimony is not in my uncle's line, Colonel. Women have schemed to catch him before now, only to find out at the last that he has been making fools of them. By the way, I didn't know till yesterday that your daughter was living with you.'

The Colonel looked hard at me, and remarked drily, 'Didn't you ?' as he put his horse at a fence and disappeared. Mounted as I was, it was sheer waste of time to attempt to ride to hounds. There was nothing for it but 'to 'ammer, 'ammer, 'ammer on the 'ard, 'igh road,' a monotonous proceeding which I varied by muttering language such as ladies should not hear. Presumably, I must have muttered in a louder tone than was necessary for the relief of my feelings, or I must have been unusually absent-minded, for I was not aware there was anybody within hearing, until I was suddenly addressed by my own name.

'You don't seem to be in the best of tempers, Mr. Sturgeon. Is my father's cob the cause ? I must admit it was hard lines on you to be obliged to exchange horses with your uncle, especially as he was going strong in the first flight, when I last saw him. Now, owing to the stupidity of my groom, I am out of it for the day. My horse has cast his near fore shoe ; but there is a blacksmith at the end of this lanc. Will you be my escort ? At one time you were a willing slave.'

'Perhaps so ; but my services were never appreciated.'

'Not at the value that you placed upon them. But why should we talk about ancient history when you are living upon a prospective future ?'

'And what is the Countess Fuchs living on?'

'On a horse which has cast a shoe. Here we are at the blacksmith's, so we had better end this boy-and-girl sentiment.'

'I never for a moment dreamt that you could be guilty of sentiment.'

'The Countess gave me a quick look, which told me that I had made a mistake. It is my misfortune that my tongue was always an unruly member. Still, it was my duty to rescue my uncle from the wiles of this Circe. Jimmy had told me that I must make love to the lady; but, though I am not a novice in the science of flirtation, love and a blacksmith's forge are somewhat incongruous, since Gretna Green was abolished.

'It is very good of you to lose your day's sport in order to look after me, Mr. Surgeon, though we may nick in for an afternoon run. Fortunately I know the coverts, which my father intends to draw.'

'And, unfortunately, I am riding one of your father's horses.'

'So I see. He is a very useful covert hack, and, as your uncle told us that he had promised to ride a new hunter for you, we thought that we would let him have a look at hounds—I mean the cob, not your uncle. It is very lucky that you have brought your hunters down to Medhurst Lodge, for we are rather under-horsed at the present time, so must rely upon you to mount your uncle. But you must thank your uncle, not us, for getting your horses into quiet condition. You can make arrangements to-morrow evening, after dinner, for sending them to the meet.'

Then, with a nod, the sauciness of which is beyond my power to describe, she took the fence out of the lane, leaving me, as her father had done previously, on the wrong side. But there is a limit to my powers of endurance. Either Bludger's cob should die, or I should be on the right side of that fence. Eventually we did get on the right side of the fence; but we did not jump it, we rolled over it. I slipped my feet out of the stirrups and fell clear, none the worse for the tumble, excepting that my new pink coat was plastered with mud. When I got on to my legs, I discovered that the cob had not only done likewise, but had also availed himself of his liberty to canter away, leaving me to follow as best I could. But even in this moment of mortification my thoughts recurred to my dear uncle, and I asked myself what had become of him, and what had become of my own horse. I did not bother my head

about Colonel Bludger's brute. I subsequently heard that he was caught by a farm labourer and put in a village pound, whence he was rescued by the Colonel at a small pecuniary sacrifice; and the Colonel to this day grumbles at the expense of mounting a friend. However, there was nothing for it now but to get back to Medhurst Lodge as best as I could, and take my revenge out of such creature comforts as Jimmy had in the house. On his return I related my experiences.

'Well, one thing is certain, the Countess means to marry your uncle, and she'll do it off-hand unless you set to work quickly to prevent her.'

'But how the dickens am I to prevent her?'

'Have you ever met my cousin, the Honourable Billy Medhurst, future Lord Medhurst of Medhurst, etcetera?'

'You introduced me to him once at the Club. Of course, I've heard of him.'

'Most people have. Billy is always making history. Now, if Billy could be persuaded to help you, the thing is as good as done.'

'What are you driving at, Jimmy?'

'The Countess, to be sure. Let us look the matter plainly in the face! We have a jolly young nephew, who expects money from an amorous old uncle. Don't frown, Jack! It's the truth. Then we have a worldly widow, who wants to marry the uncle for money and position. Enter upon the scene my cousin Billy, who will in the course of nature be one of the richest peers in the kingdom. Billy cuts out the uncle, and the jolly young nephew still remains the avuncular heir-presumptive.'

'But how about your cousin?'

'You may trust Billy to take precious good care of himself. Luckily he is coming down to Medhurst this evening. I'll take him over to dinner at old Bludger's to-morrow in your place. Mr. Sturgeon being ill, I've taken the liberty of bringing my cousin, lest I should spoil your dinner-table. You know the wheeze. Billy will have to take the Countess in to dinner, on the principle of *noblesse oblige*, and he'll make the running from the start—I mean from the soup. Then, he has no veneration for grey hairs, and, when once given the cue, will make your uncle as mad as the roaring bull of Bashan. We will stroll up to the Hall after dinner, and smoke a cigar with Billy.'

It is only necessary for me to say here that the Honourable Billy entered heartily into our scheme, providing that the Countess came up to his standard of feminine beauty—of which Jimmy and I had no doubt.

‘All right, Surgeon! Don’t worry! I’ll make love to the lady, and bully the old gentleman. It will give me a little excitement in this dull hole.’

‘Thank you, Mr. Medhurst. You relieve me of a great anxiety: for it’s my duty not to allow my uncle to be imposed upon by an adventuress.’

‘Quite so. Does you credit, I’m sure. See you both at luncheon, to-morrow. Good night!’

‘Jimmy, will your cousin succeed?’

‘That depends upon whether he takes to the lady. Billy is somewhat fastidious. Besides, he knows the ways of Monte Carlo sirens, and is as artful as a cart-load of monkeys. But my chief fear is that the Countess may see through our little game. I advise you one thing though, namely, to drop the dear uncle tone with Billy; it savours a little too much of Mr. Pecksniff, and the *role* don’t suit you.’

‘But I’ve wasted the best years of my life.’

‘In great expectations. We all know that. Most men do, who have rich relations. I’m not a moralist; I should do the same as you are doing, if I were in your place. But we can’t deceive ourselves, or other people, that we are not waiting for dead men’s shoes.’

‘Well, Jimmy, if this vixen marries my uncle I must bolt abroad.’

‘Bad as that, eh! Post-obits, I suppose?’

‘Couldn’t help it. My uncle only allows me three hundred a year.’

‘And you live at the rate of a thousand. But, Jack, your uncle must know that you can’t live on your allowance.’

‘I suppose he thinks that I make something out of my profession.’

‘Did you ever have a brief?’

‘I once prosecuted a man for petty larceny, but he got off, and the judge congratulated him upon having had your humble servant as prosecuting counsel. My chances of the woolsack are, to say the least, remote.’

‘Well, at all events, you have had a merry time, while it lasted.’

I didn't like this remark. It sounded as if for the future I should have to live on reminiscences, and the prospect did not please me. Yet I felt that I was placed in a false position. I had been living beyond my income, and upon expectations. Of course, I knew that; but I had not guessed that my friends also knew it.

The following day I lunched at Medhurst Hall, and discovered that, whatever the Yellowmoor young men might think of the Countess, Lady Medhurst did not think much of her. However, she was the daughter of Colonel Bludger, M.F.H., and so, though her husband had committed suicide at Monte Carlo, she was tolerated by county society. When we got back to Jimmy's place, I found the horse, which my uncle had robbed me of the previous day, together with this note from my relative:—

'Sir,—Is this your gratitude? You lend me a demon of a brute, which nobody with a care for his neck would ride. He nearly killed me, and would have done so completely, but for my horsemanship. As it is, I am confined to my room, and shall be for some time. The Countess Fuchs has very kindly undertaken to nurse me, so you had better return to your professional duties in London, as I shall not want you.'

This, as the late lamented Dick Swiveller would have exclaimed, was a staggerer; so I sought comfort from Jimmy.

'Then, instead of being ill, you have gone to London to-night at the request of your uncle, in order to bring down his own doctor to see him, like the dutiful nephew that you are. Do you know his London doctor, and can you trust him? Don't you see that you are told to return to your professional duties, and those duties for some years have been confined to the profession of dry nurse?'

'But, even if the doctor comes down to Yellowmoor, what is he to do?'

'Tell your uncle that, if he stays there any longer, he is a dead man—which is the truth; for the Countess will marry him, which is the same thing.'

'And how about your cousin?'

'Oh, you can leave it to him and me to do the best for you.'

I felt very uncertain how this plan would work; but, as I knew of no other, I determined to act upon it, and returned to London that evening. My mental depression caused me to sleep badly, so I did not get up till late, and it was noon

before I sat down to breakfast. I had hardly started, when, to my amazement, in rushed my uncle. He began by calling me names, the only one fit for publication being 'egregious idiot.' But I could see that he was not really angry. After he had made use of all the imprecations in his somewhat unlimited vocabulary, he sat down in my most comfortable armchair, and burst out laughing. I stared at him in silent astonishment.

'So you thought that the Countess could ensnare me, did you? Why, I merely went down to Bludger's to take care that she should not ensnare you. I knew that you had had a foolish flirtation with her before she was married, and thought that you were going to Castlecroft's place to renew it, so I determined to put a stop to your game. I am afraid that old Bludger will be in a fine temper to-day when he finds that he still has his daughter left on his hands.'

'I don't quite understand, now.'

'It's as simple as the alphabet. Bludger hears casually from your friend Castlecroft that you are going to stay with him for some hunting, as soon as you can get away from attending a cross, cranky old uncle, so invites me to stay with him, in order that you may be free; but Bludger made the mistake of telling me that his daughter was keeping house for him. Of course, I saw through his game in a moment. I was to be the decoy duck to attract you to the Countess. Now, as it didn't suit me that you should marry such a woman as the Countess, I thought I would pretend to be a suitor, rightly guessing that I should be more eligible than you—that is to say in their opinion, Jack. Well, I made the running strong for twenty-four hours, and gave them to understand from the first that you would never get a penny from me. That sent your chances of the lady down to zero, while her attentions to me were becoming inconvenient. However, Lord Medhurst's son rid me of the inconvenience last night. Having taken the lady in to dinner, he took possession of her for the rest of the evening. I pretended to be jealous, and to make an ass of myself, and came away by the first train this morning.'

'Uncle, I asked Medhurst to act that rôle, for I seriously thought that you intended to marry the Countess.'

'And to disinherit you, eh, Jack? Own up, my boy! Open confession is good for the soul.'

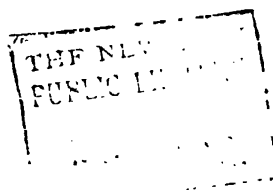
'Well—er—that had something to do with it.'

'It had everything to do with it. Now I don't wish you to



THE
COUNTRY
MAN

Eventually we did get on the
right side of the fence.




wait for a dead man's shoes, and count the minutes on the clock when he is ill. I will pay your debts, and double your allowance, if you stick to your profession as a barrister. Is it a bargain?'

It was a bargain. That is why I am writing this in the Inner Temple.

A CRITICAL POSITION.

By CHAMELEON.

OME years ago there was magnificent hunting away up in the lumber state of Michigan, and what still remains is not in any way to 'be sneezed at,' as the old saying is. It is not, however, what it used to be, and the same must be said of most of the territory nearest to the greatest spread of population. One of our guides and camp-carers was a man of great sylvan experience, and many were the stirring tales of flood and field with which he was wont to regale us as we lay around the fragrant fire of pine boughs, with the round autumn moon peeping down at us through the interlacing tree-tops. A conversation the other day recalled one of his best stories, and it may not be without interest to the many readers of *Fores's* in other parts of the world than this. I tell the story in his own way, but without the 'burr' and intonation which could never be reproduced in print without parodying it.

'One spring, when the game laws were not so strictly observed as they are in these days, we had been up in the woods late in April, hunting and fishing. Trout was our special aim, but, if a fat deer came along, why, we just nabbed him for a very welcome change of diet, and thought no harm done. We ran rather short of store supplies, and so made up our mind to work down, cross the great river, get what we wanted, and then return to camp for another week or two, until the influx of city people to the pineries brought our harvest season along, and we should have to leave.

'All went well until we reached the river, striking a point where it was about a mile wide, and that very night there commenced one of those old-time rain storms that meant business, and there was nothing to do but to up with the tent, dig an extra

deep trench around it, and whistle for clear skies. It rained for three days and four nights, and we had to light fires under the canvas, to keep the tent habitable, and endure the smoke. We would have struck out for one of the lumber camps, but I had slightly lost my bearings, and did not know to a mile or two where I was, not that it was any matter. The fourth day we laid around to let the tent dry and get our traps in order, and by the morning of the fifth day the old stream was a whooping it up pretty lively, and I almost hesitated to cross, although our boat was a pretty staunch one, and would stand most weathers; but we had three rather green city men in the party, who, although they were all right along the streams and lakes where we had been hunting, were not calculated to tackle a wild river in full fresh. However, we decided to take the bull by the horns, and about noon we struck out with all traps aboard.

'Fate was on our track, for five minutes one way or the other would have made all the difference in the world in the story I have to tell. Five minutes later we would have been across, and five minutes earlier I would have been able to describe one of the grandest sights even seen by mortal man from a spectator's point of view, instead of now telling it from the standpoint of a participator and a sufferer. As we started from the shore, my mate says to me, "Bill, don't you hear a boom humming?" meaning that somewhere above us there was a big lumber yard, where the great logs are piled high up on the banks, ready to float down to some lower point for shipment on the rails. At these yards there is always a big boom made of logs fastened together to form a floating fence, in which are confined all the logs that get afloat as the river rises, and, when a sudden flood comes like the one then running, it lifts all the thousands of piled logs and sets them floating, with nothing but the boom to keep them from tearing miles and miles down the river, to the loss of the owners, unless they "jamb" somewhere, and give the men a chance to come up with them and control them. When the boom "hums" is when the logs are afloat by the thousand, and the heavy rush of water is backing up and straining the boom to its breaking point.

"No," I answered, "I don't hear any boom, the waters are making too much swirl." So we went along, and when we got about 400 yards from the side we heard an enormous rip and tear away off up the river, just at the bend, and the next

minute I saw the black logs come crashing round the turn. "Grcat Scott!" I yelled, "we are six miles lower down than we figured on, and we are in for it, and no mistake."

'Going across the stream as we were, there was no hope of us reaching the side and getting up the bank out of the way before the logs would be on us, and to be caught there meant death any way, while to be caught with the rush only meant to be carried along some ten or twenty miles out of our way. So we headed around, let every one lie down on the bottom, and waited developments, as the cat said when it ate the Paris green. Released from the boom, the logs for the first mile or two outran the pace of the stream in front, for the waters had been pent up behind until strong enough to break it down, and so they soon caught us, and in less time than I can tell we were in the middle of a sea of logs, spinning, tossing, rearing, and plunging, as if they were actually alive. For an hour or two this went on, and then in the distance we saw an island jut right out into the main stream, and also that the logs began to bear in to the narrow side, and that meant a "jamb." No inexperienced person can comprehend what the word means to a lumber man! The first log that stuck was a big hemlock, as thick as the body of two men, and sixty feet long, and as it jambed it reared right on end, and down it went straight as an arrow, with the rest of the adjacent logs piled up against it as against a wall of steel. In a minute we were lifted, boat and all, ten feet above the surface of the water, with these great logs falling all around us, thrown up into the air like straws by the force of the water, piling up around us until we were surrounded to the height of several feet, and then, just as we began to fear the piling walls would fall on us, the water seemed to take a turn in the direction of its pressure, and, as if with the idea of burying us alive, the logs began to fall in a transverse direction, until we were completely roofed in, so that there was only the sky to be seen by patches through chinks.

'This was a very dangerous position, for two especial reasons: the bottom logs might slip, and the top ones crush us flat as mud turtles; or the weight, ever increasing, might drive us down below the water level, and drown us like rats in a trap. Added to this was the fact that the "starters" when they came down to scientifically break up the jamb by withdrawing the key-log, might not find us or hear us, and so we might be crushed in the mad break up, or again we might be

kept there a week or two until the river fell, and we might be starved out. Thus it was a very pretty tight place to be in. I want now to say right off that never did I see clearer grit than was displayed by the gentlemen of our party. My mate and I, of course, fully understood the position, and did not make a fuss, but those three fellows just had a quiet talk among themselves, and then asked me what was to be done, and when I said, "Nothing but wait and say your prayers, if so be you know any," they proposed dinner, right away, and then, after the good square meal that all should be put on rations, according to the limits of the commissariat. That was kind of humorous, and, little thing as it may seem, it proved our salvation. We had been in the jamb about eight hours when we started up the fire, and the smoke curled up through the logs and at the same time nearly smothered us, there was so little draught, but we had our meal, and then, dividing the party up into watches, we turned in for sleep. All the next day, and the next, we could hear the heavy falling of the logs around us, and so knew that the river was still rising, and the next day I could see it under the boat, not more than a couple of feet away, and then the noise ceased and the water remained stationary. So I knew that the first great danger was past and that we would not be carried under. There we lay for six days with the pile of logs over us creaking and groaning like evil spirits in torment, and then we began to despair, for our stock of food was running pretty low, but, just when our spirits were at the lowest ebb, I heard the sound of an axe at work and I knew that the "clearers" had arrived and were going to break the jamb. We shouted, but no answer came; we had no wood for a fire, for the logs were too wet, and we had no room to swing an axe, and our stock of fire-wood was exhausted, and it was an anxious night we put in, to be brightened at morning by the sound of a voice telling us to shore up the inside as well as we could, that our first fire had been seen and brought the "starting" party down, but that they had not been able to reach us earlier than now, and that they could not clear us out in any way, except by starting the jamb and trusting to Providence to clear us from the falling logs. Well, my mate and I got to work, and we braced and fixed matters as well as we could with the oars, &c., for a very little thing will fend off a moving log if it is placed right, and it was towards 4 p.m. that we received warning that the key-log was to be started. "Cot, cot, cot," we

heard the axe sing away off in the distance, then there was a moment's stillness, to which we listened with hearts in our mouths, and then came a grinding and a tearing, as the fabric broke up, and we could see the logs above us bend and creak, and, as the pressure increased, the front ends slowly coming together like the prow of a ship, and then, with a sudden shudder and grasp, the front sank down, the roof of logs rolled forward with a sound like thunder, the walls fell in at the base and out at the top, the boat saved us just long enough to let us mount the rolling mass, and then it was flattened out like a piece of paper, and disappeared from our sight, and there we were almost blinded by the sudden sunlight, all safe, lying on the rushing logs. Two of the city men fainted, and small blame to them, I scarcely knew where I was myself, until I had a bottle with something good in it thrust between my lips, without my ever seeing the brave fellow who came running over the heaving logs at the risk of his life to give us all the much-needed "nip."

'When I fairly came to myself I looked around and saw the river, far as the eye could reach, covered with logs all riding serenely along at a good round pace, and capering about on them were a number of men, whose principal object was to clear away the logs and get us drifted to the shore, for they did not as yet know of our miraculous escape. It is, I believe, only the second case on record where a party has been caught in a bad "drive" and escaped with their lives, let alone personal damage. Our boat was gone, of course, and that upset our chances of making much money that summer, at least we thought so at the time, but we had saved our party, more by luck than good looks, and, after all, that is the first duty and aim of any guide who amounts to shucks. Well, we saw our party to the train, and they promised to send a cheque for what was due to us, for the bulk of their money had gone with their clothes to the bottom of the river. A week later I received a cheque made out to me and my mate—it was for 1000 dollars, and knocked us as flat as your hand, it was a fortune to each of us, and with it came a letter—well, some of the party have been at my little shebang and have seen it framed against the wall, and, when I die, why it goes in the box with me.'

Such is the modest version of the story given by the guide, but it is well known that nothing but his personal skill and practical knowledge ever brought the party safe through, and

of the three men he saved, one of them to-day, fills one of the highest offices in this country of Uncle Sam, and report says that every Christmas there is a very graceful remembrance passed from the east, westward to the modest cabin in the Lumber State.

A VERY HARD RUN.

By SNAFFLE,

Author of 'Gun, Rifle, and Hound.'

GOOD morning. I presume I am going right for Crowhurst Clump?'

Rarely, if ever, have I ridden to covert in a worse temper than I was in that morning. The day was one of those miserable ones, on which it is just possible to hunt, for the frost had been an early morning one, and, though it had left a horrid numbing feeling in the air, the ground was only hard on the surface, and that hardness was fast yielding. The thawing branches dripped in an unpleasant manner, and wraiths of fog stood here and there among the undergrowth.

But this was only the beginning of my troubles: I was riding Tip-top, and he was just the very horse of all my small stud I would have picked out not to take to Crowhurst Clump. Not that I am by any means the man to allow my groom to dictate to me what I shall ride. But when the Fates take a hand in the ordering of things (and that the old ladies of the distaff and shears did interest themselves in my affairs that day is a fact of which I am now fully convinced), mortal man must submit.

It ought to have been the Slave's turn that day. That useful quadruped, though fully acquainted, as a couple of collar-marks proved, with the shafts of my dog-cart, did a day for me at times, and was fully equal to all the 'minor efforts of 'oss enterprise' which could possibly be required at that worst of all indifferent meets. For about the first time in his life, however, he was reported coughing at 'evening stables.' Topthorn was in physic, and Light of Love, besides having done a hard day on the Monday, was minus a shoe, and my only possible blacksmith lives seven miles off. What was I to say at five o'clock on the eve of a hunting day? What I ought to have said was that I wouldn't go. I see that now. What I did say was—and I may

perhaps plead that the waning winter had been a hard one, so it was natural I didn't want to lose a day—that I would ride Tip-top, and risk the pasterns of the best horse in my stable among the flints that cover the ploughs, which alternate with the interminable woodlands of the Crowhurst district.

The best horse in my stable. Yes, that he certainly was that day. Sometimes, when he has carried me well (for I still have him, and will never part with him for a reason you may know if you have patience to wade through this yarn), I call him the best I ever had, and at others, the d—dest brute. But that is when we have had the bad luck to come on water. It isn't that the horse will, absolutely *not* jump water. The Slave is of that sort, and consequently, if ever I know there is water in front, I make tracks along the road for the nearest bridge. With Tip-top, on the contrary, you can never tell. Sometimes he will cock his ears and fly it—ay, if it were a score of feet. At other times, the veriest runnel brings him up all standing in the very last stride—a trick that not even the investigation with me of the bottom of several very cold and very dirty brooks has cured him of. Fortunately, there is not much water in our country.

Tip-top may not be a horse for the Shires, but then, as you have long since guessed, from the size of my stud, I hunt a very long way from Melton, or Market Harborough either. They would call him a little horse there, but though he looks about fifteen hands, he measures a little nearer sixteen under the standard. I dare say they would say he's troubled with the slows there, but if his pace is not wonderful, he can keep it up for an hour or more. He may, perhaps, not have scope for a real Leicestershire big place with ox-rails on both sides, but to see him transact a big bank with a ditch to you, and complications beyond, is indeed a pleasure. Need I say he is Irish? I think not.

I've read in novels about a person being somebody else's *âme damnée*. I don't know quite what they mean by it, for my French is only school French, and I've only been out of England once in my life—to Paris, to see the Grand Prix run for. If it is to be translated literally, I should say that Crowhurst Clump is the *lieu damné* of the —shire Hunt. The Master, who is bound to meet there about four times in the season, hates it worse than anybody, and it is bad to be anywhere near a hound the day we meet there. Not only is the place short of foxes (I'll swear the last one we killed there was a bagman, for he had

long hair on the soles of his pads), but the country is abominable, and we generally draw away from home right on to the borders of our country. Where it isn't woodland, as I've said before, it's plough, and it is the only bit of our country where there are flints—any amount of them. The oldest member never heard of a run from Crowhurst Woods, but we go there nevertheless, with the idea perhaps that good runs come when least expected.

* * * * *

When the words I have put at the head of my story fell upon my ear, I turned with a start. Somebody had been talking about a point-to-point hunt steeplechase at the County Club the day before, and I had been wondering if they would arrange to get water in the line. If not, of course, I'd ride Tip-top; but otherwise, would Light of Love stay the distance with eleven stone seven on her back? I ride about a stone less. So absorbed was I in my day-dream that I had never noticed somebody coming along the green siding, and the words woke me from my day-dream with a start.

It was a stranger. Now we don't care very much about strangers in —shire, so I replied briefly :

'Quite right. Straight on to Crowhurst Village, and then take the first turn to the left. You can't miss it.'

But my stranger was not to be shaken off so easily. Instead of trotting on, he pulled out his cigar-case and asked me for a light. I was smoking myself, so I couldn't refuse. When I trotted on he trotted on beside me; and though I hardly replied he continued to chatter about anything and everything, pleasantly if rather incorrectly (he referred to the Prime Minister as Disraeli, for instance). At last I felt I must reply to something he said, and we rode companionably on to Crowhurst Clump.

He was a tall, but not very heavy man, with a full unkempt-looking black beard, and hair to match. He wore a blue double-breasted coat, cord breeches, and butcher boots. Neither of these was a good fit, and both looked very countrified in make, besides, a pea-jacket is hardly part of a hunting costume. His eyes puzzled me; though I couldn't catch them, I could see they were never quiet, and he had a fidgety way of looking over his shoulder I didn't understand. In his right boot—stuck in it I mean—he had a sort of wooden knot I couldn't make out the meaning of. As far as his dress was concerned I should have put him down as a horsebreaker, or something of the sort but he was evidently a far better educated man than I am.

The mare he rode was a beauty: too good for —shire, some people would have said. Too good for Crowhurst she certainly was. She was a blood-chestnut, nearly, if not quite, thoroughbred, and whole-coloured but for one white foot, and a splash of black colour just behind the off hip-bone. Many of the Blair Athols have this, I believe. She seemed less fidgety than some chestnuts, and her rider, who seemed quite at home in the pigskin, rode her on the snaffle, leaving a gag-rein hanging loose. Pulls a bit with hounds, thought I.

Meanwhile, we had left the village behind, and, having time enough (I hate being hurried, so always start early) were walking our horses quietly up to the spot where half-a-dozen Scotch firs make up what is known as Crowhurst Clump.

Of course, the question, 'Who's your friend?' was asked me pretty often that morning, for the —shire Hunt is a bit of a close corporation, and we all know one another pretty intimately. The answer was difficult, too, because Blackbeard seemed always close to me, and when we threw off he joined me as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

The sport was pretty much what I had expected—perhaps even worse. In fact I began to speculate as to the possibility of riding Tip-top first horse at Bursted Cross-roads next day, when hounds opened, and in two minutes it was 'tally-ho away' from Fiddler's Wood. Two minutes more we had in the open, during which I saw the stranger handle the chestnut mare most artistically at a very cramped place, and then it was over. A main earth in an adjoining covert had been unaccountably overlooked, and no terrier was available to eject our fox. This was the last straw.

'I shall go home,' said I, out loud.

'With your permission I will avail myself of your guidance too,' said Blackbeard.

Of course I bowed. Nor was it till long afterwards that it struck me that I never even thought of asking where he was going. So few people live my way. Presently I turned off into a bye-road away from the hounds. They were going on two miles to try Preston Withy-beds as a last resource.

'Good night,' 'Good-bye, Vane,' cried several voices. Then we jogged on alone, talking amicably enough.

* * * * *

Somehow or other, the conversation had turned on steeple-chases.

'I used to ride a bit,' said Blackbeard. 'I've won the——' here he checked himself suddenly, and looked sharply at me : 'I've won several chases in my time.'

'Pity you don't belong to our Hunt,' I replied. 'We're going to have some point-to-point races this month'

'Point-to-point races? Ah, I see, the old-fashioned thing : make for a landmark, eh?'

'Well, yes, something of the kind.'

'Ah,' he said, 'I never rode in a chase of that kind. It was Croydon and Aintree in my day.' A funny way to speak, thought I, for a man not much, if at all, over middle age.

'I should like to try that,' he added, presently, looking directly at me. It was the first time I had caught his eye, and I confess I didn't like it. There was a creepy sort of fascination about it. I was sorry I'd ever said anything about chasing. A few minutes' silence followed.

" 'A Race for a Life,' " he said suddenly ; 'there's a book with that name, isn't there?'

'There may be,' I answered. 'Isn't it "A Race for a Wife," though—young Lochinvar sort of business?'

'No, no,' said the stranger, 'it's "For a Life," I mean. "A Race for a Life." Suppose we have a race for a life, now?' He turned right round in his saddle to look at me, and his eyes seemed literally to flame.

Now I knew! A sudden light flashed across me. The man was mad—a homicidal lunatic, probably, from his last words. I never had had anything to do with the insane, but I had read or heard that they must be humoured.

'All right,' I made reply, as calmly as I could ; 'when shall we say—this day week?'

'Now, now!' he almost screamed, losing almost all self-restraint. 'The horses are equally fresh. How far is it to that church-steeple there?'

'About four miles.' No harm in admitting that, anyway.

'That's what I thought. Well, that shall be our winning-post.'

'Stop a bit,' I said quietly. I wonder, now, how I could do it. 'You said a race for a life. Whose life?'

'Yours.' I looked back along the road ; but Humble Common is generally deserted. It was so now. My lunatic went on : 'Yours—or mine. If I win, I'll take your life. If you win, I'll take my own.' Now it was out.

'All right,' I said, 'but you haven't got anything to do the job with. Better say Friday next, at the same time and place.'

'Haven't I?' he rejoined grimly. He leant down to his right boot, and with a little difficulty drew out *a common butcher's knife with a wooden handle*. Now I knew what I had seen at his boot-top. My last chance was up. I must depend on Tip-top now and on Providence. No human aid could save me. I 'sparred for wind' to the last.

'It isn't a fair race. Look at the difference in class between your mare and mine. You ought to fill your pockets with stones, anyway.' I wanted him to dismount.

He looked at me sharply enough. 'Haven't you the pull in the weights already?' he asked. 'Nearly two stone I should think. No, no, it's fair enough. But I'll make it fairer, I'll give you a start. You see that tree there?' He pointed to an oak with its top branches withered by lightning, a good three furlongs on. 'You jog on there. When you turn in through the gate underneath it I shall start. That's half a mile start, or devilish near it.'

I could think of nothing more to say, so I moved off. Could I hide anywhere? No, it was all open common to the tree. Could I slip off my horse further on? How can one hide five-foot eight of red coat and white breeches? Would anybody come? No, far and wide nobody was in sight. Once I thought of waiting at the tree with a stirrup-iron unslung ready. But the madman was a more powerful man than I, and the knife was too big a handicap. I looked round. He had dismounted, and was quietly tightening his girths. A horseman, anyway, however mad. So much the worse. But his action reminded me not to throw away a chance. I didn't trust him enough to dismount, but as I went along I drew my girths, and overlooked everything down to the curb-chain. The outlook was gloomy enough; I could hardly hope, bar accidents, to beat him. If I could, all was well, for there was sure to be somebody about at Hamblemere. But I knew of no nearer house, and I had seen the mare and her rider perform, and could hardly hope for their falling.

Buried in thoughts like these I reached the oak-tree, and turned round to look at my antagonist. He was mounted again, and had tied his handkerchief to his crop. I could see it fluttering in the breeze. I thrust open the gate and passed through still looking back. As I did so, down dropped the extemporised:

flag, and the mare moved off towards me, her rider busy with something—no doubt untying his handkerchief. The 'Race for Life' had begun.

The first half-dozen fences were easy ones. Tip-top was in the best of tempers (between ourselves he doesn't always care about fencing alone) and I was so busy thinking about the best way to Hamblemere that I hardly thought of the lunatic in my rear. Presently I had a chance to look back. He had forced the pace a bit at starting, and was not a quarter of a mile behind me. My spirits rose at this, for I thought only a duffer would do such a thing, but then I reflected that it was probably done of set purpose, not to lose sight of me in the closer country. Well, I wouldn't press Tip-top anyway. He might be mad enough to win the race fair and square, and expect me to come and pay forfeit afterwards. He'd wait a long time first, thought I.

At present he seemed to have no intention of coming alongside even. We'd gone about half-way when I looked back again. The mare, evidently hard held, and quite at her ease, was lying about a couple of fields behind, and taking her fences in my hoof-tracks. Evidently, Blackbeard knew his work. He would continue to maintain his relative position, making me his pilot, and then the mare would smother Tip-top for speed in the last half-mile. I breathed more freely. If he was going to ride out the race fair and square as it now seemed, it would be, however easy a win for the mare really, so far a close finish that we should get to Hamblemere together. It would be curious if no one was in sight then to prevent the exaction of the penalty I should be under. All I had to do, then, was to keep my horse going and on his legs to save my life if I lost my race. I turned complacently round in the saddle, verified my conjecture and rode on.

Fool! As I topped the ridge a light broke upon me. To think that I, who, as man and boy, had hunted in —shire for nearly a score of years, should forget the Toosand Brook. There it was a short half-mile in front of me, winding along the bottom, and in no way to be avoided by one going to Hamblemere. There were two bridges, one nearly in the line. But that was only a foot-bridge, a mere plank. The other was so far to the right that if I made for it Blackbeard might think I was not riding the race out, and proceed to murder me at once. And I was riding Tip-top. If it had only been I, light of Love

now. Or, better still, the Slave. Nobody, however mad, would ever have thought of getting a race out of him.

It was Tip-top, however, worse luck, and I must try what he would do. There was no certainty about it, that was one thing. But if he refused, or got in, that beastly knife would be in my back before another five minutes were out.

I had landed in a long, narrow field that sloped gently down to the brook. So far good, unless the horse could catch the glint of the water off the top. I pulled him together down the hill, and then I set him going for all I was worth. If ever a man's heart is on the right side of a brook, mine was then. It was not quite the best place I could have picked, fourteen feet (for I measured it), and the far bank two feet above the take-off. 'A broken back for Tip-top if he jumps short,' thought I, for the landing side was straight up and down. The horse had his ears cocked, and I hoped he meant business. Twenty yards—ten, a swing, a slight peck, and Toosand Brook lay behind me.

A yell made me look round. Whether it was the sight of the brook, or something else, I know not, but the lunatic was fully displayed now. He was sitting back in his saddle, waving the knife. His hat and whip were gone, and he was driving the mare all he knew. This should mean grief, but the mare's sort are not easily brought to grief at fourteen feet of water. I ought to have turned and ridden for my life, but I was fascinated, and could only canter on, looking back.

One chance there was. I noticed now that where Tip-top had landed the bank had sunk; in other words, was broken and undermined. Now, Blackbeard did not appear to be guiding the mare at all, and she might, probably would (most horses do), follow her leader. He never pulled her together for the leap, but she covered the water easily in her stride, landed exactly where Tip-top had done, and, the bank breaking, hung a few seconds and then rolled back into the water on her rider.

Shouting for help, I rode back to the brook. Surely I could manage my mad friend now, even if his cold douche had not cooled his head. But help was at hand. One of Squire Forrester's keepers was, without my knowing it, in the same field as myself, and had watched the last part of the race. Between us we pulled the unfortunate man out of the brook. He was quiet and sullen now. I left him to follow under the escort of the keeper, who had his gun, and, taking the mare's rein, went on

to the village. Here I soon got a tax-cart, and, sending the horses to my stable, took Blackbeard to our doctor, who willingly took charge of him.

Word was passed to the police next day, and before it was out they had a telegram from the private establishment he had escaped from. Within forty-eight hours of our race he was re-incarcerated.

* * * * *

Nearly a week later I was in my den after lunch, when a card was brought to me: 'Mr. Warden.'

'Don't know the name,' thought I. 'Show him in.' An elderly gentleman entered.

'I must apologise for troubling you,' he said, 'but I was anxious to thank you for your kindness to my unfortunate son last week, and to say how much I regret you should have been subjected to such a terrible experience.'

'Pray say no more, Mr. Warden,' I answered. 'You can in no way be held responsible.'

'It may be some satisfaction to you to know,' the old gentleman went on, 'that you beat on that occasion one of the finest riders in England. This I think you will admit when I tell you my son's racing name, Mr. —; you might, I dare say, have recognised him had he been shaved.'

I knew the name well, of course. George — had won the Grand National twice (once I had seen it done), the big Croydon Chase three or four times, and smaller races innumerable. His father went on:

'I don't know if you heard of the terrible fall at Leominster, which ended his turf career?' I assented. 'At first he was only idiotic, poor boy, but gradually he developed homicidal mania, and we had to send him away from home. It appears he got the clothes he was wearing in W——, and persuaded Mrs. P——, the well-known livery-stable keeper there, to let him have the chestnut mare to hack over to K—— at six in the morning. So he rode over twenty miles to the meet. A good beast, eh?'

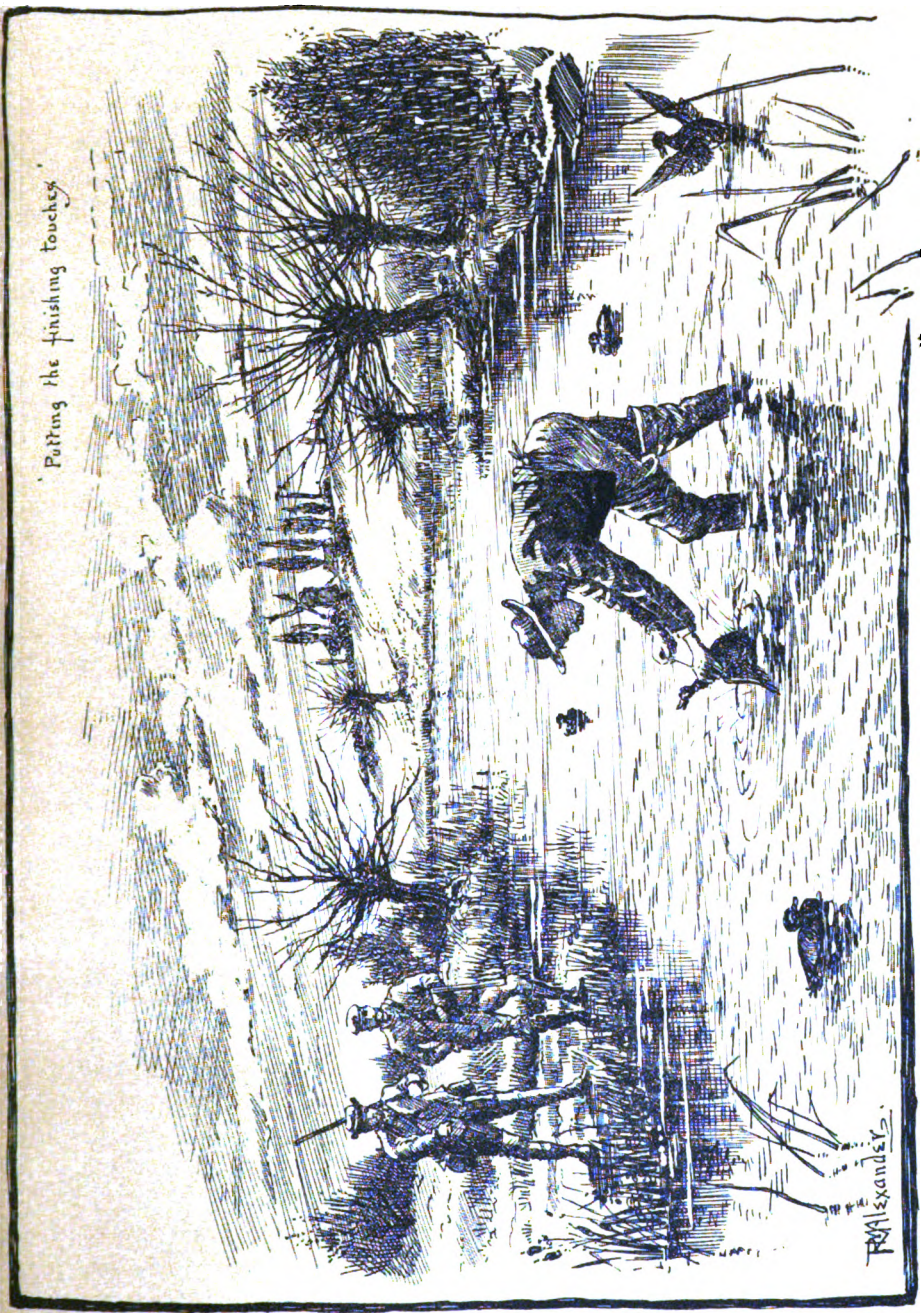
'I should say as good a hunter as ever looked through a bridle.'

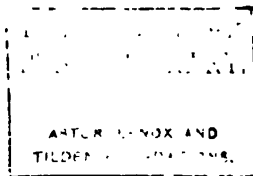
'Then I hope you'll accept her from me as a slight testimony to the regret I feel for what you've suffered on our account. Come out and see her.'

I tried to refuse, but the end of it was that I went. There

Putting the finishing touches.

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was the mare just as I had first seen her, but for a cut from poor George —'s spur, as they fell back. Mr. Warden would take no refusal, and the chestnut—Come-by-Chance I call her—remains in my stable to this day. No doubt she is the most valuable horse in it, but old Tip-top is still the favourite, and, when he puts me (as he does at times) into the Toosand Brook, I console myself with the reflection that he didn't do it when I rode my *Race for Life*.

DUCK-DECOYING.

By L. CLEMENT.

IT is a very remarkable thing that, although in France, in Belgium, and in Holland, decoying ducks, for *shooting* purposes, is a most extensively enjoyed sport, here in England it is an absolutely negligible quantity, although decoying ducks wholesale into decoy-pipes is here a very well-paying game, wherever it can still be practised, for, owing to the over-population and the large extension of railway lines in the fens and other marshy districts, a good many of the old decoys have had to be given up.

Well, now, I propose in this article to deal with the most artistic way to decoy ducks to the gun, as it is practised in a great many places in Holland. I say advisedly, *the most artistic way*, because, although many thousands of ducks and teal are shot over decoys in France and in Belgium, yet the plan resorted to in those two countries is, as a rule, simplicity itself, and not a bit artistic.

Two rows of decoy ducks are tied to two parallel cords in front of the shooter's hut, and he trusts to luck to bring him sport. But, in Holland, the duck-decoyer is an artist who neglects nothing to ensure success. With that object in view, he not only uses two rows of decoys, like his French and Belgian confrères, but he also enlists the services of a flying mallard—and that is where the artistic touch comes in.

Now let me describe my personal experience of the scientific manner in which the trick is done.

I had been judging, single-handed, at a big international

show in Germany, and there, amongst the many exceedingly attentive and polite exhibitors, I had struck up a firm friendship with a Dutch gentleman of very strong sporting proclivities.

The show lasted a week, and we used to foregather daily for hours, our ideas on things in general, and on shooting in particular, being exceedingly similar. Hence it came about that my friend, who owned an extensive marsh in the north of Holland, described to me the hut which he had had built there and the fun which he enjoyed therefrom every season.

'You ought to pay me a visit,' he said; 'I would show you some sport.'

And so it was arranged, and to cut my story short, the end of October found me at my worthy friend's house, where he treated me *en prince*.

I arrived early in the morning, and we arranged to spend the night in the hut.

Well, judging from the huts which I had seen in France and in Belgium, I expected to find some sort of a large dog-kennel roofed over with reeds, and where one has to lie down, or sit up, but where it is impossible to stand up.

But oh! what a surprise! The path which led to the hut was fenced in on both sides with high reed-screens, and when we reached the hut I found it as large as a labourer's cottage, though, of course, with only the ground floor, and the interior had been so cunningly devised that we could stand upright and walk about very comfortably. There were two camp-bedsteads, an oil stove, a carpet, a couple of arm-chairs, a table, glasses, plates, dishes, knives and forks, &c., &c., and, in a large locker, a cellar containing a score of bottles of various wines and spirits.

Facing the door was a partition behind which were two slides, cut in the side of the room. These slides were then open, and through them I looked upon a pond some forty yards long by perhaps twenty or thirty broad, the whole being surrounded by reed-beds.

The decoy-ducks were already on duty, pegged in their places, on two lines, mallards on the left, the ducks on the right. The decoy-man in his long boots was paddling about in the shallow water, putting the finishing touches to the proper arrangement of the birds, and his poodle was gravely sitting on the shore, watching his movements.

I went out to see how the place looked from outside, and

found, as I had expected, that from a little distance you could not tell that there was such a building there, the whole of the place being so encased in the neighbouring downs, and so covered over with rank grass, &c., that it was absolutely undistinguishable from its surroundings.

As we had yet a good hour of daylight, we took a ramble with our guns on the downs, and shot four or five rabbits and a brace of partridges. Then, as it became dusk, we betook ourselves to the hut, where we found our tea ready. The man had got everything ship-shape for us, and we thoroughly enjoyed our meal. He then cleared the table, put everything away in their places, placed a bottle of whisky, a couple of sodas, and two glasses on the table, and then began his vigil in the front compartment. I noticed then that he took with him and placed by his side a goodish-sized basket, containing something alive.

'May I ask what is in there?' I queried.

'The flying drake,' said my friend.

'But don't you think, by the bye, that we might have had a little fighting before coming in here?'

'No,' he said; 'and I will tell you why. If any fighting birds are about, they are sure to pitch here.'

Just then the man shut the slide he was sitting by and came in, holding his finger warningly to enjoin quiet, and whispered something.

Simultaneously the ducks outside began clamouring. We picked up our guns and went 'to the front.'

The decoy-man was already there with the drake in his hands, and, with a swift motion, he threw it out.

The bird quickly gathered speed, flew along the surface of the pond, being saluted when he did so by a loud clamour of 'couacks! couacks!' from the tame ducks, and contented murmurs of 'coins! coins!' from the tethered drakes. Then up he rose, right in front of the glorious rising moon, and then he disappeared.

'He has gone to see the travellers in the clouds,' said my friend; 'but he will soon be back.'

Sure enough, within a few minutes, the bird flopped on the pond, swam to the hut, came in, waddling through a little aperture at the back which I had not noticed before, and going straight to a shallow box containing corn, he began feeding greedily.

'Now, keep your eyes skinned,' quoth my friend, as he

pushed his gun-barrels through his slide, and I did ditto through mine. The decoy-man was standing silently behind us, and the dog, who had been asleep up to then, was now thoroughly wide awake.

Quack! quack! Coin! coin! outside, from our ducks.

Splash! splash! splash! splash!!!—down flopped a dozen wild birds, right amongst our decoys.

'Wait until they "bunch" clear of them,' whispered my friend.

'Quack! quack! quack!' went our ducks.

Then, in the clear water, between the two lines of decoys, appeared five swimming black shadows, then three more. The rest were invisible.

'Don't wait, take the left lot,' whispered my Dutch pal. 'Now!'

And out rang our four barrels. Our decoys jumped at the explosions, but soon settled quietly. Six birds were dead, paddles upwards; two more wounded ones were scuttling away into the reeds. The rest had bolted.

Out went our man with his dog, and I noticed that whilst the man waded to the dead birds, the poodle, taking no notice of these, went on his own, sniffing in the reeds, from whence he presently emerged with a cripple. He took it to his master, who told him to go on ahead, and in a few minutes the dog found the other pricked bird.

Eight fine birds were the result of our first shot. Not so bad, was it?

Of course, there is not much skill in potting birds in that style, but there is a great deal of skill in bringing the birds close enough for the guns to bear on them. Besides this, there is the novelty of the thing—its quaintness, its loneliness, and its weird surroundings—so, altogether, the fun is *not* to be sneezed at.

Well, we had a drink on the strength of that first shot, and then, things being quiet outside, we played a game at cards, had one or two more drinks, and then lay down to sleep, the man in the fore compartment keeping watch throughout the night.

He called us up twice, and in the morning, when we left the hut, we had a score of birds to put in the dog-cart—all fine wild ducks in the grandest of condition. And thus ended my visit to a Dutch duck-decoying hut.

I suppose the reason why duck-decoying to the gun is very

rarely resorted to in the British Islands is because yeomen, farmers, &c., and, in fact, most people who live in the country have something better to do, in the way of *£. s. d.*, than to ensconce themselves in huts, night after night, in the hope that wildfowl may come within reach of their guns. But, on the Continent, a distinctly different kind of thing prevails. There, living is hard to get, labour being so very badly paid for, and even farmers on a fairish scale find it hard to make both ends meet. Hence any little source of income which may present itself is eagerly snapped at, and the more so when, in connexion with making a little money, there is imported into the transaction an element of sport. For, strange as it may appear to insular ideas, the instinct of sport is developed to an extraordinary extent amongst Continental men. Indeed, the ruin of many a farmer is directly traceable to his unrestrained love of the gun. Let whatever work be urgently required to be done at the farm, the farmer who is imbued with such an all-absorbing passion will leave everything for his gun, if he can reasonably hope to have some sport. Hence, I may safely say that, throughout the northern coast of the Continent, there is not a pool, or pond, or marsh, or bit of likely stream or even salting, which is not duly worked by local men, night after night, throughout the season.

And, moreover, most of these men make but a poor return out of their outlay; but there it is, hope is for ever burning in their breasts, and, luck or no luck, the fellows *will* go duck-decoying.

Now, most of these men are decidedly not by any means well-to-do, but they will contrive to erect a suitable hut somehow, wherever there is a likelihood of some birds turning up. Ingenuity is remarkable, now and then, in some of these cases.

Thus I, personally, knew a man who, not owning a square foot of land himself, had perforce to patronise *communal* ground, that is, land which belongs to the parish and is open to all—common land, in fact.

But here, of course, he could not dam the stream or pond which he patronised, because the other people below would have kicked up a shindy on the matter. Moreover, he could not build a stable or permanent hut, since the ground did not belong to him. And then again, in very hot and dry summers, the water dwindled and receded day after day.

Now, in view of all these drawbacks, most people would

have, in common parlance, 'chucked the thing' up,' as a bad job ; but this ingenious fellow was full of wit, and he built to himself a portable hut, which he could drag into position anywhere. Of course, a Rothschild would have objected to lying about, full length, all night in a kind of dog-kennel, on straw which, no doubt, now and again, smelt rather musty ; but this decoyer was satisfied with the accommodation he had provided for himself, and, indeed, such was the attraction of the fun, that, not infrequently, bad as his quarters were, he often had a pal with him to keep him company, share his vigils, shoot with him, and divide the spoils, if any, in the morning.

That hut was simplicity itself. On two large boards, secured crosswise by cross-pieces, or battens, were willow branches bent over, tunnel-shaped. These were covered over with reeds all round (except in front, for shooting purposes), and that was all.

I have spent a night in it myself, and enjoyed it very well, but I should not have cared to have gone again, because it was irksome to be obliged to lie cramped in almost the same position all night. Of course, you could get out to stretch your legs and smoke a pipe, if you liked, that is, if you went right away for fear of frightening any wildfowl which might have been about, but the decoyer strongly objected to any such proceedings, as likely to endanger the sport.

This man only used four call-ducks, which were tethered to two parallel lines right in front of the hut. As the birds had to be very rarely tethered in the same identical spot, he provided himself with four stout sticks for fixing the two lines, and waded in the shallow water to fix them all right. The marsh, I may state, was a good mile from the village where the fellow lived, but there he was every evening, half-an-hour before dusk, carrying a large basket containing his live birds, the four stout sticks he required for fixing them, and his duck-gun slung over his back. Behind him trotted his little nondescript cur, but that mongrel, though he did not look like it, 'knew a lot,' as the saying goes, and the hutter told me, and I believe him, that he had never lost a bird with that dog.

'It does not matter how far the bird falls,' he said, 'but this little dog cocks up his ears, marks the thud of the bird's body when it strikes the ground, and he is off after him and will have him.'

'Good,' I said ; 'and I notice that he is liver-coloured, that is the colour I have always advocated in a dog which is used for

'wildfowl shooting. The birds don't seem to mind a liver-coloured dog, and, as a matter of fact, I think they fancy it is a fox, and are thus rather apt to "mob" him than to give him a wide berth.'

'You are quite right,' he said; 'for, I know a man, who is a great enthusiast, like myself, on duck-decoying, and he actually uses a little dog for the purpose of bringing the wild birds, who settle on his pond, near enough to him to be shot.'

'Is that so?' I queried.

'Yes,' he said, 'I have been with him myself, and have seen him do it, and he did it marvellously well; but my friend has a far better-arranged hut and pool than I have.'

'Where does he hang out?' I inquired.

'About forty miles from here,' he said. 'You can go by train to within a mile of his house.'

'Do you think he would let me join him one night?'

'Certainly, if you make it worth his while.'

'Right you are. We will discuss that matter in the morning.'

We had been talking in whispers, of course, and the dog, who was in the hut with us and sitting in front of us, suddenly stirred in the straw.

'Look out,' hissed my companion; 'there is something up.'

But it was only a 'night-flighter' going home, after all.

'Any luck?' asked the fellow.

'No, not yet,' said my companion.

'Well, good night!' and off he went.

'That fellow is an awful nuisance,' said the hutter; 'for, he will fire at moorhens, dabchicks, and any little things of the sort, and he upsets the marsh. Now he's gone we have the marsh to ourselves, for the nearest hutter is a mile away nearer the sea.' Just then there was a bang in the distance. 'That's him, firing. I hope he will send us some stuff. Yes, here they come!'

Three shadows were just flying over the reflection of the moon on the pond. We had seized our guns and got ready. The birds flew round and round, narrowing their circles at every turn, and at last they flopped on the water, but too close to the call-ducks. So we waited until they got in the clear water, and, 'wallop!' we floored the three. Altogether, we had seven or eight ducks for our night's work.

'Well, you see, sir,' explained the man, 'I can get two francs for each bird at the hotel, that is very nearly a

napoleon earned in one night, and that is not so very "dusty" as things go.

On our way back to his cottage in the morning we discussed my going to pay a visit to his *confrère*. He gave me a letter for his friend, and, to cut the story short, I went the very same day to Abbeville, and from thence to the village where lived and thrived the redoubtable hutter in question. After I had introduced myself, explained what I desired, and given him my late companion's letter, he coughed in his hand, scraped his chin in a thoughtful manner, and eyed me rather dubiously.

'Can you shoot?' at last he blurted out, in a doubting sort of way.

'Well,' I said, 'I have shot twenty-two good pigeons from the trap and killed them all, if that is any criterion.'

'The devil you have!' he exclaimed, and forthwith he extended his right hand wide open. We shook hands, and then I suggested a visit to the hostelry of the Lion d'Or, where I had left my gun, cartridges, and other impedimenta. They had no whiskey there, but very nice cognac, which, judiciously mixed with soda from a syphon, made a most comforting gargle. We had several of these, and got quite chummy. Then we had dinner, and he finally embraced me as a long-lost brother.

As I had spent the previous night as I have before described, I was not particularly keen on going again a-hutting that particular evening, so I made up my mind to 'sew up' my present companion, and *I did*.

The next day, however, everything was arranged, and we started quite early in the afternoon. This man was fairly well-to-do. He owned a nice little house, with a good-sized garden and a grand orchard. Moreover, the marsh where we went was his own property, and, being of good extent, he had arranged and built there quite a little decoy, with reed-screens artfully arranged in the style of the screens used here in England for decoying ducks in 'pipes,' only he had no pipes and no netting — this netting is, it appears, forbidden by law. As for the rest, he worked his decoy-dog exactly as it is worked here (where, by the way, it is called a 'piper').

Well, that evening was a grand one for the sport we had on hand; nothing could have been better. The live decoys, which numbered a dozen, and were kept by a man close by, were ready tethered when we arrived, and I then for the first time clapped eyes on the dog. He did not look a likely or lively



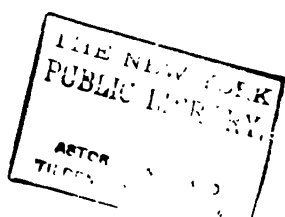
"Out Rang our four barrels"



"Six birds were dead"

R. Alexander

see page 52



sort of customer. He was a prick-eared, rough-coated sort of terrier, reddish-brown in colour, and with a very bushy tail ; but his looks belied him, for he never missed bringing in the stuff near enough to be shot at and smothered.

Altogether I enjoyed myself immensely. For one thing compared to the reed-hut I was in two days before, this one was like a palace—chairs to sit on, &c.

The *modus operandi* was as follows : Whenever my host spied some birds *on the water* he sent the dog forward. 'Carlo' ran down the outside long reed-screen, unseen by the birds, until he reached the end. Then he suddenly appeared in the moonlight before the astounded birds. At first they darted away startled, then they wheeled back and faced the dog with outstretched necks and hissed and spat at him, as though to say, 'You ruffian, we know you!' Then the dog jumped back and disappeared behind the screen, only to appear over the next (and nearer to us) screen, and so on. And the foolish birds followed him up, nearer and nearer, until their doom was sealed.

The dog performed admirably, as I have already said, but I pointed out to my comrade that the dog could only be used when the wild birds were *on the water*.

'Quite so,' he said ; 'but what would you have me do?'

'Why, do as the Dutch do, have a drake trained to fly to the wild birds in the clouds, and bring them to the pond.'

'I have never seen it done,' he said, musingly. 'Have you?'

'Yes.'

'Well, how do they manage it?' he inquired.

And I told him.

'Ah!' he said then, 'that is all very well in Holland on large estates, where no one can shoot but the owners ; but here, if I threw up a live drake, I would never see him any more. He would be shot, by mistake possibly, by some prowling gunner, and there you are!'

I saw the force of that argument.

DRAWN FROM A WELL.

By MAJOR-GENERAL R. BRACKEN.

NO doubt popular opinion is right, and wonderful tales are told by Indian sportsmen ; but, as a resident in India for upwards of thirty years, with an experience during that period of sport in most of its branches, I can conscientiously say that there are few sporting stories I would not believe, provided they were told me by a good sportsman whom I knew to be reliable, as actual *bond-fide* facts that either had happened to himself or had occurred within his own personal knowledge. It must be remembered that the stories of a sportsman of any standing skim the cream of the narrator's long and varied experiences, and are usually the outcome of a life spent amidst the jungle in almost continual contact with Nature. The Psalmist records his opinion that it is they who go down to the sea in ships who see great wonders ; but no man can live the best years of his life as a sportsman in India without seeing and experiencing veritable wonders also, more especially if he has a love of Nature, and is gifted with the faculty of observation. It is extraordinary how some men go through the world with their eyes shut and never seem to take in what passes around them. Others, on the contrary, observe the smallest trifles, and draw true deductions from all they see. If these latter are unfortunate enough to suffer from the unhappy combination of a good memory and a loquacious tongue, depend upon it that upon their return to England they will speedily come under the category of 'perverters of the truth,' and, although politeness may prevent the actual words from ever reaching their ears, they will soon become aware from the long faces of the audience and the gentle patient sigh of resignation that escapes whenever they commence one of their most thrilling, blood-curdling tales, that these stories are, alas ! discounted, and are regarded as perennial inflictions by all but sympathetic Anglo-Indians, who are alone able to appreciate their truth and their value.

An excellent story is told of two young officers recently returned from India, one of whom was rather garrulously relating at table to an open-mouthed audience a number of genuine

travellers' tales. At length when talking of small-game shooting, and of the phenomenal bags of snipe and of quail that can be made in favoured localities by a good shot, the narrator happened to remark that Indian partridges roost on trees. His hearers could stand a good deal, but this was a little too much. Partridges roosting on trees indeed! The idea was absurd, ridiculous. Why, they knew from their own home experiences that partridges never did anything of the kind, and therefore they at once raised a howl of incredulity against the unhappy sportsman who had been so rash as to advance so palpable a mis-statement. In dismay he turned with confidence to his friend for corroboration. 'Ask Tomkins,' he said, 'he knows all about it.' But Tomkins was a cautious individual, and, being of a quiet, reserved nature, preferred to take the easier course. 'No, I never heard of such a thing,' he was astounded to hear him reply. 'Never heard that partridges roost on trees!' he rejoined. 'Why, bless me! you have seen them in trees often enough when we have been shooting together.' But Tomkins only shook his head, as a sign that he was not to be drawn on the subject, whilst his friend was obliged for the remainder of the meal to sustain as best as he could the distrust with which his now discredited tales were received. No longer was he regarded as an authority, and much mortified was he to observe that the Indian stories of life and sport narrated by individuals who had never set foot in the country were now preferred to his own. Upon leaving the table he at once tackled Tomkins, 'You know as well as I do, old fellow, that Indian grey partridges roost on trees. Whatever made you say they didn't?' 'Because I saw, old chappie,' was the reply, 'that they all put you down as a confounded liar, and I was not going to be thought one too.' And so the astute Tomkins preferred in his cynical selfishness to give his friend away, and to be in reality what he was afraid of being publicly considered.

These anticipatory remarks are intended to prepare the readers for a really curious tale. In my own home circle, let me frankly confess, it is generally discredited, but we are told that 'no man is a prophet in his own country,' and I am certainly no exception to this rule. For all that, my story is absolutely true, and I can vouch for its occurrence exactly as I relate it. In the maidan or open plain outside my bungalow at Benares were several old disused wells that were frequented by pigeons, and, as these birds formed a welcome

addition to the larder, I used often of an evening to saunter round with my gun, in the hope of bagging some of them. Flying quickly from a well, they offered a pretty and by no means easy shot, whilst they required some killing, as they could carry away a lot of lead. On the occasion in question, I had quietly approached one of these dry wells that was about fourteen feet in width. Looking down, I saw a miserable half-starved pariah dog at the bottom, crouching in a huddled-up position at one side, its neck bristles up, whilst it shivered and seemed completely paralysed with fear. At the other side was a large cobra erect, with glistening eyes and expanded hood, its forked tongue moving with a fascinating rapidity as it remained apparently on the defensive. Both creatures had apparently tumbled in, or possibly the well might have been the customary retreat of the cobra, and it was the dog that was the intruder; but, however this was, it was very evident that at that moment they were very unwilling companions in close quarters, and each seemed afraid of the other. The situation was highly dramatic, and would probably have soon terminated in the death of the quadruped, if I had had time and inclination to have waited for the conclusion of the tragedy; but the traditional human enmity against the reptile class was too strong within me, whilst I have always loved a dog, and accordingly I at once shot the snake; then, procuring a rope that was at hand, I lowered it as an experiment to the frightened pariah, more with the idea that a native would have to descend by it in order to bring the dog up. To my surprise the animal grasped it with his teeth, and was in this manner hauled to the surface, and so released from durance vile and from its incongruous and unwelcome companion.

Now, I have no doubt that some of my readers may be inclined to consider this instinctive act on the part of the dog as exceptional; but it was not so, as the following circumstances will prove. At Meerut, many years ago, the young officers were in the habit of hunting bagged foxes and jackals that were captured and brought in for that purpose by gipsies. They had a bobbery pack composed of dogs of every variety, size, and description, readily able to kill a fox, but, not ordinarily so well able, with their small teeth and want of grip, to demolish a jackal, the hair of which, especially about the neck, is particularly thick, and affords wonderful protection to the animal. But a jackal's salvation really consists in the

power it has of making its skin loose so as to give with a bite, and in its habit of shamming death. In a worry amongst the pack it would be pulled all ways, until to the inexperienced observer it would seem that the poor brute must have been torn in pieces, and there it would lie, apparently dead and quite oblivious to everything around it; but only call the dogs off and withdraw every one to a distance, and then the cunning animal, without a movement of its body, will cautiously open its eyes, and, after a careful glance round, will get up, give itself a shake, and then will quickly make tracks as fast as its legs can carry it. On the occasion I speak of, the jackal was released in the open plain, and after sufficient law the pack was laid on. Master Jack headed for cover and gained the outskirts of some gardens; but before he could take advantage of his position the dogs ran into their quarry. In the *melée* that ensued, an adjacent wet well some six feet wide, in which the water was from ten to twelve feet down, offered the only asylum to the hunted animal, and it deliberately jumped into it. Remembering my experience with the dog, I at once procured a rope and lowered it to the jackal that was swimming round and round in a very contracted space, glancing up at me from the darkness with its gleaming greenish eyes. The beast gripped it, and I hauled it up. Directly it reached *terra firma* the dogs made a rush and it at once shammed dead. When left to itself, it soon discovered the coast to be clear, and at once made off. We again laid the pack on. Again after a circuit, in a vain endeavour to shake off the dogs, it once more sought the sanctuary of the well that had before befriended it. Again I lowered the rope, and again hauled it up by its teeth. A third time we hunted it, and a third time did I haul it up, and I can assure my readers, extraordinary at it may appear, that four consecutive times this performance took place, and that four times I personally hauled that unfortunate jackal out of the well by the rope, the animal saving its life each time literally by 'the skin of its teeth.' There is no doubt that the whole proceeding was more cruel than sportsmanlike, and would not be tolerated in these more humane days; but we were youngsters at the time, keen for excitement in any form, and anxious for any object that promoted open-air sport and exercise. My readers will be glad to learn that the jackal was not in the end much the worse for the rough touslings it underwent by the dogs, and for its voluntary immersions in the well.

The marvellous sagacity exhibited in these two cases shows almost reasoning powers, and proves that between human intelligence and animal instinct the distinction is, in some cases, not very marked. No doubt, the well offered the only secure refuge from the pack, whilst the hunted animal realised when in the water that certain death by drowning would result unless it escaped from its position. That it should have been driven four times to seek the same sanctuary could only have been caused by dire necessity and terror, and therefore the really extraordinary part of the occurrence seems to me to have been the wonderful instinct displayed in grasping the lowered rope, and in holding on until released from its situation of danger. There is no reason why two such instances of animal sagacity should be confined to India; very possibly, in this country, occurrences may be known of an animal in a state of extreme desperation, or acting in a similar manner. It was quite by chance that I lowered the rope to the dog, and perhaps the idea of doing so may have never occurred to others. But, if any of my readers have ever had a similar experience, and will kindly inform me of the fact, they will feel that they are assisting to restore my somewhat faded reputation for strict veracity in my own domestic circle, whilst I shall feel that I myself no longer require a metaphorical rope to draw me from the well of incredulity into which I plunge, whenever I am weak enough to narrate these positively true occurrences in the bosom of my at-present unbelieving family. I beg to add that my well, in which is truth, was not located in Australia!

HOW CHERRY ANGELL GOT ROUND.

By 'AN OLD TURFITE.'

THERE must still be a good many men in the West End of London, not above the period of middle life, who remember George Angell, the Cherry Angell of all his immediate friends. 'They whom the gods love die young,' they say—all the younger if they make their own pace, and thirty or forty years ago it would have taken a starting gate of something stronger than ribbons to have kept some of the hotter youths back behind the red flag of warning.

George Angell was kindheartedness itself, and on one occasion indeed, when a wild horse of his, which had cost him lots of money through its misbehaviour—Piscot I think it was called—was about to be added to the list, a telegram arrived when it was on its back in the hobbles, for Mr. Barrow, F.R.C.V.S., to suspend orders. Heavily interested in the London cab trade, he owned a few clinking good racers, amongst which Kettledropper and others, ridden by T. Parry and Dan Butler, were possibly the best. With these he won a good few of the plums at suburban meetings.

It was in the back end of a season which had not been too prosperous, that Cherry found himself in the North of England with a horse which he thought was a little above the class he was likely to meet in what he called the Arctic regions of the sport, for he never liked to venture far from his dear old London if he could help it. Redruth was the name of the particular meeting that was on, and Charlie Bates, as his horse was named, was in for the principal stake, the Tykeshire Handicap, at the nice easy weight, as it was considered for him, of seven stone five, which was exclusive, however, of a penalty of seven pounds. Even with seven pounds more it was calculated that he could win in a canter, and the only difficulty seemed to be the getting on of a tidy sum of money at a decent price. Of course, as he used to observe, there are always plenty of men at horse-racing who are equally hard-up, and one never knows who may be playing the same game. Still, there was nothing coloured on the card next morning that had any pretensions to beating Charlie Bates (so named after the Artful Dodger's companion in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*), unless it might be a horse called The Wrestler, which had shown some fair form at the Scottish meetings. He was just trying to make out how good or how bad this Wrestler might be, as he did not like the idea of getting a fall, whether it was given by hyping or cross-buttocking, when Gilston, his trainer, walked up to him at the breakfast-table in the corner of the 'Redruth Arms' coffee-room. After the customary inquiries as to each other's health, and the owner ascertaining that the horse never was better, they proceeded to outline their little campaign. They went down the list of horses likely to start for the Tykeshire one by one, and the conclusion arrived at was that they could not well lose. The stakes, however, did not run to much; and even at the back end of the year the idea of starting his horse to win a few hundreds was not pleasant to Cherry, who

worked in larger sums than Gilston, and who, somewhat sharp and unscrupulous, was careful and economical for his class, a class that are by no means given, as a rule, to thrift and a humble style of living.

'It's always a bit for corn and hay, Mr. Angell, and winter-time comin' on. I know well what it is to have a stableful for three or four months only a-kicking and a-coughing for their keep, and the forage merchants dunning you all the while. If it were the beginning o' the season, it would be different; but when it comes to the back end, you must take what you can get.'

'True enough, Gilston, true enough. It's just because I have a lot of horses to keep, quite a hundred that don't know anything to kick softer than granite pavement, that I am anxious to get a bit. Besides, there are several expensive yearlings which will have to be ready to meet their engagements.'

'Yearlings, Mr. Angell, and to keep engagements? What do you mean?'

'Ah, well, they are a class of young ones you ought never to have anything to do with. "Twelve months after date pay to me or my order" sort of cattle; once on the back of these and they are all certain runners, and you won't be left at the post, Gilston. But have nothing to do with them if you'll take my advice. And now I think you might try and find out a little more about The Wrestler and his owner, and all that. We must have our expenses out of this trip, if it's nothing else, though I strongly suspect that if we were to steal the cash-box of this hotel, the town and neighbourhood of Redruth would be bankrupt to-morrow. That's the worst of these pottering little North-country gatherings. No matter how good a man's horse is, he can't get more out of him than he would do over swapping him for a sea-side donkey. However, we'll see by-and-bye. Good morning. I'll see you at the course.'

Cherry was not far wrong about his yearlings, except as to overstating their youth, for there were some that were due to have their engagements met at little less than six weeks from the time at which he was speaking. If he did not turn up in time, most likely his horses would have to go to the hammer, and with prices at the back-end very low, there possibly would not be anything of a surplus.

In due time he found himself at the course, where the first thing he did was to ascertain what Gilston could pick up about Wrestler's owner. Except, however, that he was very rich and

somewhat new to the game, he could gather nothing. He did not bet as a rule, it was said, but was known to be a heavy speculator in iron, he being indeed an extensive ironmaster. This was not much to go by. There was really little to work upon, and the first races proved the truth of the theory advanced as to the robbing of the hotel cash-box putting the whole place in the Bankruptcy Court. It came on for time to weigh for the Tykeshire Handicap, and still Cherry had not made up his mind what to do. Getting an introduction to Mr. Smeltall, as Wrestler's owner was termed, he found that gentleman, like most new ones at the racing business, a little dull as to such hints as, 'With mine out of the way I think yours could about win, sir,' and 'It's being a very expensive thing bringing a horse down North, and all that.' He either did not, or would not, understand. These remarks possibly made him believe that the race was quite at his own and his horse's mercy.

Time and clerks of courses wait for no man, and the saddling bell soon rang out for the event of the day. Sammy Dixon who had not been riding many of the opening races, was the first to pass the scale for Wrestler, and Jackson, who generally rode Charlie Bates, stood ready at hand for orders. It looked easy enough to win and get a little along with the stakes maybe, but how to get fully round was the question. He had just resolved that his horse would not start when an old friend, who knew all about northern ways and northern horses, stepped up to ask him if his horse was as good a thing as it looked.

'Why, Radcliffe, you are the very man I've been thinking of!' was his joyful exclamation. He then told him exactly his position. In the next half-minute Jackson was dressing to ride Charlie Bates. The second part of our story we shall prefer from Cherry's own lips, as told in the smoking-room of the White Horse Cellars in Piccadilly, a little over three weeks after Jackson went to scale.

* * * * *

'Yes, I tell you, boys, it looked mighty bad for me up in the North Country, till I met Billy Radcliffe. Gilston was a good man at preparing a horse and all that, but no hand at playing the game in the higher sense. Smallness, I should think, was bred in him, for his mother had run for a smock at a harvest-home, and his father hobbled through a sack race for a pair of moleskin breeches. If the Jockey Club had countenanced flapping, he would have run any horse at a country fair for a

saddle and bridle. Billy Radcliffe knew this, maybe, as well as I did. However, when Jackson was dressing, he let's me know a little more as to how matters stood. Smeltall was one of those provincial fools who would rather win the Parish Pump Sweepstakes at their own door than the Derby, the St. Leger, or any of the big handicaps. He meant to be Member of Parliament, some day, for his native county of Clumberdell, and possibly had a reason for trying to make himself popular. He was the managing director of several large blast-furnaces, and it was generally declared that, shilling for shilling, he could shove out as much money as Lord Lowther, whose minerals he rented. The Clumberdell races were down to be run a fortnight afterwards at Maryville, Smeltall's native town, and the capital of the northern iron industry. The entries were to close next day for the Maryville Cup, and Radcliffe had got to know that for this Wrestler had already been entered, and that his owner had set his heart upon winning. "There will be no penalty if he wins to-day, and if he beats yours," and Bill winked at me slyly, "every miner in Clumberdell will back him for his pickaxe. Don't think there will be no money about like at this little cattle-show sort of a meeting. Why, there's Dick Hargreaves, his foreman at the furnaces, keeps the "Bull's Head," at the works gate, and makes them take their pay on Saturday night over the counter. Dick makes the book for the lot, and they all bet. Over at Cockerton, Joe Grindlay does the same thing in the "Green Dragon," and it's the same all over the county. Ready money from three or four thousand men who make good wages comes to a lot, I tell you, and every penny of it will go on Wrestler if he wins to-day.'

'I'm not going to tell you very much about what happened after that ; the return Calendar of the race, in which mine was a bad third, ought to be good enough for most folks, seeing it is official. Mayhap, a pailful of water had a little to do with it, and Jackson may not have ridden his best. Whether or not I posted off his entry that night for the Maryville Cup.

'Well, round came the Clumberdell races, and you will not be surprised that Gilston, and Jackson, and the horse, and myself, and Billy Radcliffe should be there. It was lovely autumn weather, and every miner and ironworker in the county was on the course, some wearing handkerchiefs with Smeltall's colours, which were red, white, and blue. Radcliffe had arranged to give me the ropes and stick close to me. I was to try and get one good bet, with the Wrestler's owner if possible, and if I was a

bit smart, seeing he was sometimes bad-tempered, I might manage it. Billy had got conveyed to him that I was nothing but a jumped-up London cab-driver, who put on a great deal of side, and wanted taking down. It was just as he said. All these big ironworks publicans had got any amount of money for The Wrestler, and filled the regular race-going bookmakers from Sheffield and other places full of it. The horse was soon at six to four, and latterly two to one on, and against mine I had offered five fifties from half-a-dozen quarters. I didn't take them, but said I would be round again in a minute. I knocked up against Smeltall in an unconcerned way, and with an air of a disappointed and disgusted man, said something about it being another little tin-pot hole like Redruth. He did not seem to like anything disparaging said of his native town, and spoke of my horse not having much of a chance, and that his was "favreet"—in fact, he was as proud of his horse being favourite as if he had been actual winner.

"Favreet!" says I, with a sneer; "in a place where you could only get a farthing to a cake, any horse ought to be favourite. If I were to lay an even thousand against your horse, how many of your pig-iron dumpers would it take to lay their bank-books together to make it up?"

'This was a hard shot from a jumped-up London cabman.

"I'll take it myself," says he.

"Right!" says I. "That's business."

'In half a minute more, and before they knew where they were, I had closed with the men who had laid me the five fifties, and in the meantime Billy had slipped off to take all the outside money.

'Well, I scarcely knew how I stood, my last bet when the starting bell rung being a hundred to fifty on Charlie Bates, which won easily enough, as you know, by three lengths. There was no objection, though they looked as if they would have liked to lynch me, and I did not wait to see the last race run. Billy Radcliffe had been as quick and active as myself, with the benefit, too, of knowing all the local men, and came out of it so well that he knocked the game off entirely for that year.

'As to myself, I have got round beyond all expectations. But let me tell you that though some say that Cherry Angell will get it hot in the next world, like all the other wicked angels, may I have to ride a hobby sea-horse in a merry-go-round round the North Pole to all eternity, if you catch me racing up in the Arctic regions of the turf again.'

AN UGLY ADVENTURE.

By WILLOW.

IT was on a bright and very warm September afternoon, some few years ago, that I alighted from the cars of a Canadian Pacific train at the railway-station of a small town in the province of Ontario, whither I had come with a letter of introduction to a Mr. Jacobs, who, I had reason to believe, was one of the wealthiest and most influential men in the neighbourhood. As I walked out of the small station-office, I inquired of a sun-burnt young fellow, who was standing in the doorway, as to whether he could give me directions where to put up for the night.

'Oh, yes,' he replied, 'there's the Norman House, and the Gregg House—a dollar and a half a day is the rate at both of them. This is the Gregg House, right here,' indicating, as he spoke, a building which stood exactly opposite, and about fifty yards away; 'you'll be comfortable enough, there, I guess.'

Thanking him for his information, I took my way across the road to the hotel, where, after a few inquiries, I registered my name in the visitors' book, and proceeded to inspect the bedroom I was about to occupy. It was a nice, bright little room; everything looked fresh and clean, and, though the upholstery was somewhat scanty, I made up my mind that I should be comfortably lodged; and this impression was amply verified on my retiring for the night, inasmuch as I did not awake till nearly ten o'clock the next morning.

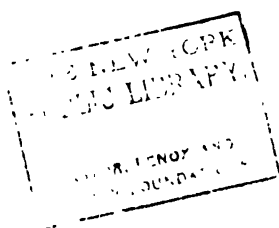
The first thing I wished to do was to call on Mr. Jacobs with my letter of introduction; so, after making a few inquiries as to the direction in which his house lay, I set forth to try and find him. I was much disappointed, however, on reaching the house, to learn that he was away with his family just then, and that he was not expected back for a week or ten days. Well, there was nothing for it but to stay on at the hotel until he returned, and I tramped back along the wooden side-walk towards the town, feeling particularly lonely, and wondering what on earth I should do with myself in the meantime.

After the first day or two, however, I began to get more accustomed to my surroundings, and I soon began to make acquaintances amongst the guests at the hotel, and thenceforward the time passed quickly and easily enough.

"It was Carr"



A.C. HAVELL



Among others, with whom I was on speaking terms, was a tall and wiry-looking Canadian named Carr, who seemed to take quite an interest in my affairs (for, of course, they were pretty well known all over the house), and he certainly did a great deal towards driving away my feelings of strangeness. He was by no means bad-looking, and was possessed of a sun-burnt countenance adorned by a dark moustache and small grey eyes. His conversation also, although much interlarded with the expressions peculiar to the country, was highly entertaining, relating, as it chiefly did, to sport of some description. Many had been his narrow escapes from death amongst the 'grizzlies' in the Rocky Mountains, and now he spoke of going for a day's partridge-shooting in the 'bush.' I had previously told him of our own game-shooting in the Old Country; and he replied that of course it was better done in England, yet it was not bad fun in Canada, and that, if I cared to try it, he would take me with him when he went himself. 'We will go the day after to-morrow,' he said, 'if you like; and I guess, if we hold straight, we ought to make a pretty good bag. But I wouldn't say much about it before we start, because, if we don't get much luck, we shall never hear the last of it from these people here, if they hear of it.'

I was, of course, delighted at Mr. Carr's proposal, and it was quickly arranged that on the next evening but one we would hire a 'rig'* and team, smuggle our guns in, and set forth as if for a two days' drive into the country our real destination being the cottage, about twelve miles distant, of a man who, Carr said, would put us up for the night, and act as guide to us in the bush.

The evening came; and at eight o'clock the rig was waiting for us at the hotel door. We jumped in, having previously stowed our guns and other paraphernalia unnoticed; and away we went at a good pace down the white and dusty road; whilst the dusk of evening was fast deepening into the obscurity of night.

These rigs, as they are called, are very lightly and beautifully made, and, with a good team of horses to draw them, they seem to fly along anything like a good road. But the way which we were now pursuing was terribly rough and uneven, and every now and then we experienced a jolt which threatened to test the temper of the springs; whilst some of the small bridges we passed over—merely a few planks laid across a couple of

* Phaeton.

stout joists—seemed as if they must give way beneath our weight.

‘Say!’ said my companion presently, ‘this isn’t much of a road though, is it? it’s getting so dark too; I can hardly see to keep in the track.’ Then, addressing the horses, ‘Git up! What’s the matter wid you? Git up!’ and again we went plunging and jolting along the rough and uneven road.

Well, after some hours of this uncomfortable driving, we pulled up at a small cottage, by the side of which stood a wooden cattle-shed; and here, my companion said, was the end of our journey. A man came out to meet us, and helped to unhitch the horses, whilst interrogating Carr as to the reason of so late a visit.

‘Why, Jack,’ returned the other, ‘this is a young gentleman from the Old Country—he’s only just out—and he’s come over with me for a bit of partridge-shooting to-morrow. You can put us up, I guess?’

‘Guess I can,’ returned the other; ‘but it’ll be pretty close sleeping-quarters, you know. Come in!’

We now entered the cottage, and deposited our guns and ammunition in a corner of an ill-lighted and bare-looking room, the sole furniture of which consisted of a roughly made wooden table, and a couple of three-legged stools of the same description. From a nail driven into one of the wooden supports of the cabin, depended an old single-barrel, muzzle-loading gun, and also a shot-pouch and powder-horn. It was evident that the owner of this rude abode was in the poorest of poor circumstances, a fact which was further revealed by the longing glances he cast at a hamper we had brought with us, and which we now proceeded to unfasten. We all three then set to, and made a good meal off a couple of chickens and bread, the edibles being washed down by the inevitable rye-whisky; whilst a shaggy kind of sheep-dog, who had suddenly made his appearance, assisted at the repast with great gravity and gusto.

Supper over, we lit our cigars, and, lounging on the table, discussed the prospects of sport on the morrow, till at length I proposed that we should get some sleep. This was agreed to, and Carr and I wrapped ourselves in our rugs, and, selecting different corners of the room, leant our backs in the angles, and prepared for rest, whilst the man, Jack, retired with his dog to a sort of litter in another corner. Despite the strangeness of the surroundings, I soon dropped off, and when I awoke it was six o’clock, and the morning air was wafting freshly in at the half-

open door. Carr and Jack, too, were setting some food upon the table, so I at once got up from my somewhat cramped position, and, giving myself a stretch, went and assisted them. Then, having made our ablutions under the pump outside, we hastily took breakfast, and prepared to set forth for the bush.

It was a lovely morning which saluted us as we left the cottage. The sun had just risen, and shot his pale gold rays upwards to the zenith, whilst the pale blue of the heavenly vault, fining down into misty grey in the west, gave promise of a lovely day.

'There ain't many birds about this year,' said Jack; 'there's been such a lot of rain, you see, and I dare say you'll find quite a lot of water in parts, now.'

'Oh, we shall get some,' said Carr, 'if we can shoot at all.'

'You'll get *some*, right enough,' returned the other, 'especially as we haven't brought any dogs—they just do more harm than good in the bush. This'll be the "concession" to try first, Mr. Carr.'

We were now standing by the side of a thick and gloomy-looking wood, within the recesses of which the foliage was so dense as to render the light uncertain, and like that of evening, whilst fallen trees and thick brushwood met the eye in all directions. When, therefore, the man suggested 'trying there first,' I believed he was joking, for, to me, there seemed not the remotest possibility of finding a partridge there—much less of shooting one. However, it was evident he meant what he said; so we put cartridges in our guns, and prepared for the sport.

'You walk straight down the middle,' said Carr to me; 'I'll take the right, and Jack the left; and try and keep in line a bit, for we can't see each other twenty yards apart.'

Away we went, stumbling over fallen trees, shoving through bushes, and at times splashing in pools of water that were often knee-deep. I had not come prepared for all this water, and the consequence was, I was wet through half-way up my legs in a very short time, and began to think that partridge-shooting in Canada was by no means so delightful as the sport at home. I heard the 'whirr' of a bird getting up in the distance, and, jumping into a little glade, I looked to see if he should come my way; but, almost immediately afterwards, I heard the report of Carr's gun in the distance, and I moved forward. The bush now became less dense, and, just as I penetrated into a little kind of clearing, I heard another shot, and again stood still. Almost immediately a brown vision fled

past me at tremendous speed ; but, true to the old instinct, the gun came up, and the bird dropped just on the further side of the glade. Reloading my gun, I picked up this, my first partridge, and was somewhat surprised to find that he was as big as a grouse, only of a lighter colour. He also had feathered legs, and was, in truth, a beautiful bird. Proceeding on my way, I suddenly arrived at the end of this section of the bush, and found myself in a rough grass meadow, where Carr and the other man were waiting for me. The former had also bagged one bird. We now entered another wood, and here Carr bagged a leash of partridges, and I one bird and a black squirrel. I ought to have killed another brace of birds, but they were so quick in their flight between the tree-trunks that I could not get on to them. So we went on till noon, when, feeling hungry, and somewhat fatigued, we made a halt and took some lunch. We had, up to this time, bagged five brace of partridges and two black squirrels, and felt pretty well satisfied with ourselves. During luncheon it was settled that we should beat the same ground over again, as Jack said some of the other sections were very wet, and that we should find no birds there. Accordingly, after a short rest and a cigar, we set forth with the intention of retracing our steps, and taking the woods back in the reverse order to that by which we had previously traversed them.

We did not meet with much sport, however, and by half-past three another brace and a half of birds only were added to the bag ; whilst, by this time, I, at any rate, was beginning to feel pretty tired and leg-weary.

We now entered the last section but one on our way back to the cottage, and, wet and tired as I was, I looked forward to a speedy end to the day's exertions. We were about half way through this, and were all walking within a few yards of each other, for we had not taken the trouble to spread out, when—whirr—away went a bird straight from me. I took a snapshot, and down he came. Almost at the same instant, and just as I stooped to pass under an overhanging bough, there was another and lighter report, and something cut off a twig just above my head. Not a little alarmed, I looked quickly round, just in time to duck my head as a bullet from a revolver aimed at me by the guide (Jack) sped past. I dashed behind a tree, and, seeing the man meant murder, drew my revolver, (which was providentially loaded); and, keeping well out of sight, crouched down till I could look through the bushes which

grew at the base of the trunk, without being myself observed. With my heart beating thickly, I waited a few moments, whilst all around was perfectly still and silent. Then I saw a head cautiously advanced round the trunk of a tree about fifteen paces off. Still I waited, till a shoulder appearing below the head I took steady aim, and fired. A groan, followed by a heavy fall, announced that my bullet had done its work. Calling loudly for Carr, I stood up to see if the man was dead or not, and had nearly paid the penalty of my life for it; for a revolver-shot from my left hand-side actually went through my soft felt hat, and buried itself in the tree-trunk above me. I hastily crouched down again, but another bullet which passed close to my cheek warned me that unless I made a dash for fresh cover or open ground I was a dead man; for the other, who I knew must be Carr, was quite invisible, though it was evident he had me in full view. These thoughts passed through my brain like a flash of lightning; and away I went, another bullet speeding by me, till I gained the shelter afforded by two big fallen tree-trunks, which lay, in a manner, across each other. I jumped down behind them, splashing into a pool of water as I did so, whilst yet another shot took the splinters out of the wood above me. My blood was now more than up, and, finding I could look between the two trunks without exposing myself overmuch, I prepared to watch for and shoot my assailant. But not a sign of him could I detect; and all was still, as if such a thing as murder had never been known in these silent woods.

There was a space of tangled grasses and brushwood in the direction whence I had come, and, of a sudden, I thought I saw a part of it moving; but then there was not a breath of wind to cause it. I looked again—*hard*. Yes, there was a movement, crossing from left to right of opposite me. Without a moment's hesitation I took aim and fired; and at the same instant a man jumped up, and ran as hard as he could go for the cover on the opposite side of the glade. *It was Carr!* Again I fired, and I saw him give a twist as of pain, as he disappeared amongst the trees and bushes. I heard him go crashing on for some distance; then, thinking I might as well make a bid for the open in the opposite direction, I crept off as silently and carefully as possible. Every now and then I stopped to listen, but could hear nothing; and at length I emerged in the same rough meadow we had crossed in the morning. I crept along under the bushes till I came upon a road leading into this meadow, and which, on reflec-

tion, I felt convinced led towards the cottage whence we had started in the morning.

I got inside the wood again, on the right-hand side of the road; and making my way very cautiously—for I could not tell where Carr might be lying in wait—essayed the journey back. As I went slowly on, halting at almost every tree, and peering into the bushes, my thoughts were full of the terrible adventure I was now experiencing, and of which I had so little dreamt in the morning; and a cold perspiration bedewed my brow as I pondered on the marvellous manner in which I had hitherto escaped. Thus thinking, I was beginning to feel easier in my mind, and a little more confident, when, of a sudden, I beheld a man's head showing above the top of a bush just inside the wood on the opposite side of the road—the man was gazing intently in the direction whither I was bound. I was on the point of shooting when, suddenly seeing me, he held up his hands with an imploring gesture; and I at once perceived that it was not Carr, but some stranger. I beckoned him to come to me, but for some time he would not do so, holding up his hand as if in deprecation. At length, however, after frequent and apparently anxious glances up the road, he darted across to where I was standing.

'What is the matter?' I asked. 'What were you staring at?'

'Well, sir,' he said, with a strong nasal accent, 'I didn't feel kinder safe. There's a chap gone up there with a revolver in his hand, and leaving a track of blood behind him—you can trail it up the road, there, now—so I guessed there was shooting going on, and I reckoned I'd lay low for a bit. Was it you as plugged him?'

'Yes,' I answered, 'that man and another tried to plug *me*. I shot the other, and——'

'Did ye now?' he interrupted, with an approving glance. 'Guess you given this one something to take home with him. I reckon you're from the Old Country, too?'

'Yes, yes!' I cried, impatiently. 'But come along, he's making for a "rig" he's got up there, and he'll be off if we don't look sharp!'

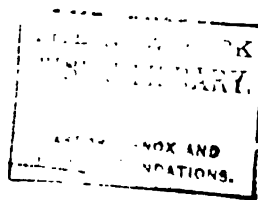
'You lend me your gun, then!' he exclaimed; 'and we'll see if we can't let daylight into him.'

We started off at a run, and had arrived within about sixty yards of the cottage, when the rig came dashing out, with Carr in it. Like a flash he levelled his revolver and fired, whilst a sharp stinging sensation in the left arm told me I was hit.



"The rig came dashing out"

Illustration by
A. Chamberlain



But his very action of turning to fire at us dragged the reins to one side, and in a moment the rig was overturned in the ditch. We ran quickly to the spot with our weapons, ready for any emergency; but there was no occasion to use them, for Carr was lying insensible and apparently dead, with the whole weight of the smashed vehicle on top of him.

Weak as I felt from my wound, I made shift to assist in cutting the traces and setting the horses free, which latter, maddened by fear, tore up the road at a mad gallop just as I swooned away.

When I came to, a glass of whisky was being held to my lips by the man who had come to my assistance.

'You'll feel better now,' he said; 'the other fellow's gone to kingdom come—his neck's broke.'

Well, I was too ill to attend the inquest held on the body of Carr; but I afterwards learnt that the body of the other man (Jack) had never been recovered, though the game which he had been carrying was found in the bush. It was supposed that he had sufficiently recovered to drag himself off to the abode of some friend, who kept him quiet. Anyhow, nothing was heard of him before, my arm being well, I returned to England, where I have since enjoyed a pleasanter experience of partridge-shooting than that I went through in Canada.

NOTES ON NOVELTIES.



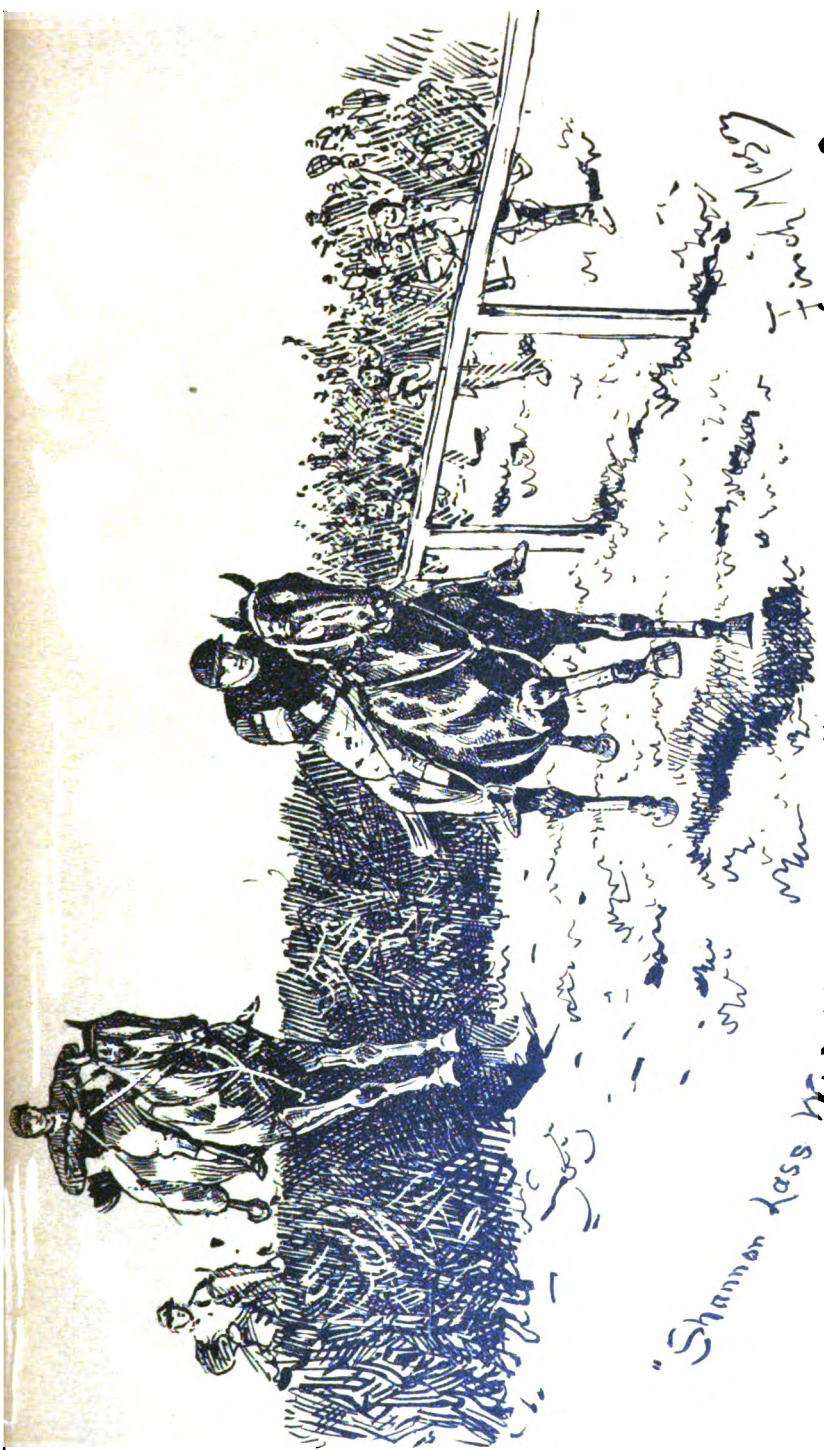
A HISTORY OF THE MEYNELL HOUNDS AND COUNTRY, by J. L. Randall, embraces a period from about 1780 to the end of the season of 1900-1901, giving an outline of the state of things, from a hunting point of view, which existed prior to 1816, when Mr. Meynell, subsequently Mr. Meynell-Ingram, first began to hunt what was then called the Hoar Cross country, and has developed into the Meynell district of to-day. There is a list of the hounds from Mr. H. C. Meynell's time (1818) till 1900, and personal anecdotes of the people, the horses, and the hounds of the Meynell Hunt, together with full descriptions of the principal runs and many interesting extracts from hunting diaries. The illustrations, of which there are about forty photogravures, contain many interesting portraits of celebrities connected with this famous hunt. The work is comprised in two handsome volumes,

which are uniform with *The Annals of the Warwickshire*, published some five years ago, and copies of which latter book are now scarce and valuable. We would, therefore, recommend an early application to those who wish to add this book to their library. The publishers are Sampson Low & Co.

An Artist's Sketch Book is always interesting to the lovers of the picturesque, and in the one just published by Messrs. Dresser, of Darlington, entitled *A North County Album*, Mr. Geo. A. Fothergill, the author and artist, gives us a number of charming sketches that appeal to antiquarians and sportsmen in general, and to North-countrymen in particular. A great feature is made of the quaint old signs and sun-dials which are to be found in the counties of Durham and Yorkshire, and, artistically treated as these are with their old-time surroundings, they make an interesting record of former days. We must, however, confess to a preference for those characteristic studies of men and horses which we look for from the author of 'Hunting Types,' and other clever sporting prints, and which are all too sparsely scattered throughout the book.

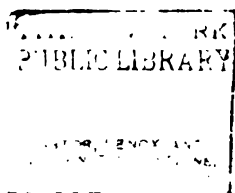
AN interesting posthumous work, entitled *Notes for Hunting Men*, by the late Captain Cortlandt Gordon Mackenzie, R.A., is published by Longmans, Green & Co. The author most unfortunately succumbed to enteric fever whilst serving in South Africa, and actually only finished the book while on his way thither. Written by a hunting man purely for hunting men, it embodies the author's experiences of more than fifteen years in a hunting stable, and it is the result of what, as his own stud-groom, he had to learn and unlearn that is now bequeathed to a younger generation in the eminently practical and useful form of these 'Notes.'

Thomas' Hunting Diary, edited by T. F. Dale and issued by 'Land and Water' on behalf of the well-known firm of sporting tailors, in an artistic as well as useful handbook for hunting men and women, and contains besides all necessary information respecting packs (including portraits of masters) and steeple-chase fixtures, experts' advice as to how one should be 'turned out' when properly equipped for the chase. The numerous illustrations by John Emms are—as may be expected from this artist—quite first class.



"Shannon lass wins!"


Finch Mob)
The Grand National 1902.



FORES'S SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

STEEPLECHASIANA.

By FINCH MASON.

NCE again has the greatest cross-country event of the year been won by a rank outsider, and once more are we told that in point of quality the field was one of the worst that has ever competed for it.

Though this was probably the case, there is no getting away from the fact that not only were the four miles and a half done in excellent time, viz., 10 minutes 3 seconds (2 seconds more than when Ambush II. won); but at least a dozen of the competitors jumped the country—universally acknowledged to be stiffer than usual—without a mistake: all going to show that if 'rum uns to look at,' they were 'good uns to go'—knew their business in fact.

Without wishing for a moment to detract from the merits of Shannon Lass, there is no doubt that the mare was uncommonly lucky to win, for on paper she was apparently held quite safe by Drumree, an acknowledged stayer, who had beaten her with ease quite recently in the February Steeplechase at Kempton Park. Had the latter not been brought down by Fairland early in the race, the chances were all in favour of his landing the Grand National for the Duke of Westminster the first time of asking.

The surprise of the race was Manifesto, who was only half trained, getting where he did, and was certainly rather suggestive of the inferiority of the field. Had the gallant old horse won outright, there would not have been a hair in his tail left when he arrived at the weighing-room door.

The owner of Shannon Lass we hear described on all sides as 'one of the best,' which is about as good a thing as can be

said of any man ; but to say that the win was a popular one in the strict sense of the word would be incorrect, for the very good reason why, that the general public were not 'on,' and when that is the case there is very little cheering when the winner's number goes up.

As Mr. Pecksniff once observed with a considerable amount of feeling when old Martin Chuzzlewit, whom he had backed for all he was worth and a bit more, failed him at a pinch (Tom Pinch, in fact !):* 'Oh, Mammon, Mammon !'

Shannon Lass is another instance of a Grand National winner being purchased by the owner for an insignificant sum ; she, according to hearsay, having cost Mr. Gorham no more than 100*l*.

Ambush II. was purchased by Mr. Lushington on behalf of the King, when Prince of Wales, for 500*l*. The celebrated Emblem, one of the best chasers that ever looked through a bridle, was bought by Lord Coventry for a mere song ; whilst Pathfinder was bought by the Marquis of Huntly for hunting purposes, from Messrs. Paynter, of Bicester, the well-known dealers.

The late Captain Tom Townely has often told me with great glee how, when quartered in Ireland with his regiment, the 10th Hussars, he and some brother officers, finding time hung rather heavy on their hands, owing to the frost, drove over one day after lunch to look through the stables of a small dealer in the neighbourhood of the barracks. The result of the visit was the purchase by Tom Townely of a good-looking hunter for 150*l*.

His new owner, one of the best gentleman riders in the army, or out of it, was not very long, you may be sure, in finding out that his chance purchase was something out of the common, and eventually The Huntsman, as the horse was now called, after winning chases all over the country, was entered in the Grand National of 1860—for which, carrying 11 st. 8 lb. and ridden of course by Captain Townely, he duly put in an appearance.

When the horses came in sight at the end of the journey a roar went up when it was seen that there were only two in it, The Huntsman being one, and Anatis, ridden by Mr. Thomas, the other ; the excitement rising to concert pitch as the pair landed on to the race-course side by side.

* 'Oh, go hon !'—The Editor.

'I shall beat you, Tommy!' shouted Captain Townely.

And, but for Anatis swerving at the last flight of hurdles and knocking one of them down right under his horse's feet, whereby he lost not only a stirrup, but a lot of ground, he probably would have. As it was, the mare, after a tremendous set to, just won. Two years later The Huntsman, who, in the interim, had been sold to the French, made his reappearance in the Grand National, when carrying 11 stone, and ridden by H. Lamplough, he started favourite in a field of thirteen, and won; Mr. 'Cherry' Angell's Bridegroom, who two years before had won the National Hunt Steeplechase at Market Harboro', beating thirty others over one of the stiffest countries on record, being second.

A sad accident happened on this occasion, O'Connell falling at the hedge before the artificial water jump, and his jockey, Wynne, being killed on the spot.

It was at this very fence, some years later, that poor George Ede (Mr. Edwards), riding a horse named Chippenham, met with a similar fate. Since then, the obstacle in question has been done away with.

His second to Anatis on Huntsman was not the only time Captain Tom Townely had been, in turf phraseology, well on the premises at the finish for the Grand National, he having ridden Mr. Gerard Leigh's Yaller Gal with third place in 1863 or 1864. Yaller Gal was backed very heavily by the stable for a place, and Tom Townely, landing on to the course in close company with a well-known professional on an outsider, with apparently lots of go in him, began to feel rather anxious about the 'situation.'

'Is yours backed for a place?' shouted the Captain.

'No,' came back the reply.

'Then don't bustle my mare, and you shall stand fifty with me!'

Whether or no the jockey in question could have upset the 'good thing' had he been inclined that way, is neither here nor there; suffice it to say that it required no very great exertion on the part of Yaller Gal to run into the place she had been so heavily supported to obtain.

Captain Townely's last chance of steering the winner of the Grand National was knocked on the head when Jerry, owned by his friend Mr. John De Heley Chadwick, broke down under him in an exercise gallop, a short time previous to the race.

The mishap was a great disappointment to all concerned, for

the money was down in earnest, and it was thought that bar accident the horse couldn't possibly lose.

This same Jerry was in truth a remarkable animal. Bred by Palmer the Poisoner, nobody knew how, he fell into the hands of one, Miles, a tenant of Mr. Chadwick's, at Mavesyn-Ridware, near Rugeley. Miles had formerly been a postilion in the Royal service, and being a bit of a sportsman it was not very long before he and Jerry were to be seen disporting themselves between the flags at most of the small cross-country meetings round about.

It was at one of these held on his own ground at Sutton Coldfield that Mr. Chadwick first saw the horse, with the result that he became his property for a moderate sum, and was in due course sent off to join his other nags, under the charge of Chris Green at Newmarket.

In those days they used to try their steeplechasers on the flat, and not over a country as now; accordingly, Jerry was asked a question one fine morning 'behind the ditch,' some of the crack jockeys of the day, including Tom French and 'Tiny' Wells, taking part in the spin. The result was that Jerry, who was anything but a beauty to look at, beat the lot in most decisive fashion.

Every one present was fairly astonished, and no one more so than 'Tiny' Wells, who, riding up to the owner, begged him as a great favour, instead of paying him his fee for riding in the trial, to invest it for him on Jerry the very first time he ran.

After this, as may be imagined, Jerry had a busy time of it, and with either Captain Townely or young Ben Land in the saddle, he won many steeplechases of more or less importance all over the country, amongst others the Grand Annual at Worcester and Cheltenham.

A very ugly horse, with the worst shoulders imaginable, and desperately lazy, he was quite at home on any description of course—three miles or four, it was all the same to Jerry. After the Newmarket trial the difficulty was to back him for his races, some one (I believe the culprit was Charlie Rayner) invariably securing the cream of the market before the stable commissioner could get to work.

As a last resource his party determined the next time Jerry ran, to try and get the money on in London, instead of at the post. With this object in view the astute Fred Swindell was

instructed to back the horse at the clubs for a thousand on the day, and wire the result to the course.

I believe it was at Warwick ; Jerry's number was up, and Captain Townely all ready dressed to ride, had just weighed out, when Lord Frederick's telegram was handed to him. And this is how it ran :

'From Swindell, London, to Capt. Townely, Tattersall's Ring, Warwick : *Can only get on a pony.*'

Beside himself with wrath, the captain ordered Jerry's number to be withdrawn that instant, and the horse to be sent home ; a course of action which, needless to say, did not commend itself to the assembled company, who at once proceeded to give vent to their feelings in terms more forcible than polite.

Like those other crack gentleman riders, George Ede (Mr. Edwards), Mr. J. M. Richardson, rider of Disturbance and Reugny, the Grand National winners of 1873 and '74, Tom Townely had, in his salad days, been an ardent cricketer. He was one of the famous Eton eleven of 1841, captained by George Yonge, and—I fancy I am correct in saying—played for Cambridge afterwards, before he was gazetted to the 10th Hussars. It is very certain that he and the 'Mate' had many a game of single wicket together in front of Sebastapol during the siege.

Mr. J. M. Richardson—the bold Harrow boy as they called him—was a shining light in the Harrow eleven, and played afterwards for Cambridge ; whilst Mr. 'Edwards,' who was like his friend Tom Townely an Etonian, though not, I fancy, in the eleven, was the keenest of cricketers right up to the period of his untimely end.

The Grand National having been responsible for the loss of more than one life, it is refreshing to know that on one occasion it was distinctly the means of saving one.

An ardent sportsman, whose lifelong ambition it had been to win the event in question, was dying, or at least supposed to be by the doctors, who very kindly gave him just twelve months to live, and no more.

Hopeful to the last, the dying man lost no time in casting about for a likely candidate for Aintree honours, his choice finally resting upon the aged Gamecock, who, as luck would have it, was just then in the market. And not only did that good horse win the Grand National, but better still, his un-

defeated owner is still alive to tell the tale, or at all events, was but a short time ago.

Harking back to the past Grand National: needless to say that it was a matter of general regret, not to say disappointment, that Ambush II. was unable to do battle for His Majesty the King, for that the son of Ben Battle would have made a bold bid for victory had he not succumbed to the exigencies of training goes without saying. As it is, the much-coveted prize has fallen to a straightforward sportsman, with the aid of a sterling good mare, about whom there was never any mystery, and whose form was so thoroughly exposed, that if the public didn't declare on they had no one to blame but themselves. She may have been lucky to win it is true, but that has nothing to do with it.

It may be interesting to the humanitarian to learn that Shannon Lass was ridden without spurs, and has never been punished in her life.

AN EXILED PACK.

*A Short History of the only Pack of English Foxhounds
that ever crossed the Transvaal Border.*

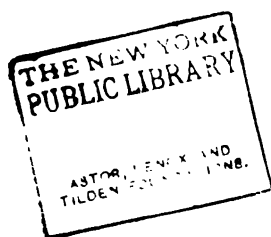
By M. BURTON-DURHAM.

EVERY Englishman is at heart a sportsman, and if he has not descended to the last rung of the social ladder or sold himself body and soul to Bacchus, he will fight against dull care and the memory of the things that might have been by indulging in whatever form of sport is afforded him, be it but a rat-hunt with mongrel curs amongst the docks and warehouses of some great city, or big game shooting in the unexplored wilderness of a vast continent.

To the eyes of the sportsman fortunate enough to be able to hunt in the shires, the Transvaal would appear anything but a good hunting country, for apart from the fact that there is practically no lepping to be found on the veldt beyond an occasional spruit or the stone walls of some Boer homestead, the going is in the winter or dry season terribly hard, and rendered dangerous by innumerable ant-bear earths, meer-kat holes, and other horse-traps with which in parts the veldt is honeycombed, and at this



David Masson
 The Grand National 1860
 ANATIS
 "I shall beat you Tommy!"
 THE HUNTSMAN.



season of the year both huntsman and hounds must be astir early if they wish to obtain sport, for the hot rays of the early morning sun very quickly dissipate the heavy night dews, and with the dew vanishes practically every vestige of scent on the South African veldt. In the summer or rainy season both scent and going improve greatly; but it requires a keen and staunch sportsman to sit in the saddle for perhaps hours at a stretch saturated to the skin, with boots brimming over with water, and unable to see a yard beyond his horse's ears through the deluge of rain. Nevertheless, in spite of all these drawbacks, that well-known sportsman and owner of racehorses, Mr. L. E. B. Homan, some five years ago imported from England fifteen and a half couples of foxhounds drafted from the kennels of the Quorn, Woodland, Pytchley, North Warwick and H. H. Hunts. The little pack were shipped direct to Durban under the charge of their future huntsman, Tom Parker (at present first whip to the North Cheshire), and they therefore escaped the usual term of canine imprisonment on Robben Island.

Upon arriving in the Transvaal the hounds were comfortably kenneled in a picturesque spot near the Geldenhuis Mine, about six miles to the eastward of Johannesburg, and they were in due course entered to both antelope and jackal, and took kindly enough to their new quarry.

Tom Parker and the honorary whipper-in, Mr. P. Burton-Durham, were mounted on small but particularly fast and clever Basuto ponies (the mount *par excellence* for South Africa).

The life of the Johannesburg Hunt Club was unfortunately but short. Parker was never able to rear a litter of puppies through the fatal form of distemper they invariably contracted shortly after birth. Several couples of the old hounds succumbed to an acute form of pneumonia; subscriptions grew scarce when bad times came over the land; and in the end, after about two years' sojourn in the Transvaal, all that remained of the pack were presented to the Cape Town Hunt Club, where I am told they have thriven well and shown remarkably good sport. And now I will, as well as my memory serves me, tell of one of the many good runs I enjoyed with these hounds.

The meet was fixed for 5.30 at a spot along the old Natal road, situate some twenty-five miles away from kennels, and we therefore had to take the hounds over to the rendezvous the day preceding the hunt; and the field, consisting of perhaps twenty men and three ladies (two of the latter were at one time

well known with the Galway Blazers), found what accommodation they were able at a small hotel, in the stables of which the pack were also kenneled for the night.

Before daybreak the next morning, Tom Parker awoke the silence of the veldt by winding a few loud long-drawn notes on his horn, a signal for the laggards to arise. A hurried breakfast and then as merry a cavalcade as one would wish to see went brushing across the dewy veldt in the direction of a big eucalyptus plantation which lay about a mile from the hotel. 'Covert hoick! covert! push him, my little darlings!' is the cheery cry as Parker puts his hounds into covert, and not many minutes have elapsed when a whimper from old Amazon is taken up by a second and yet a third hound. Then comes a crash of glorious music from the entire pack, a chorus of deep bell-like voices that re-echoes from kopje to kopje, and awakens in the heart of more than one of the field the memory of many a good run enjoyed in the old country, and perchance of bright eyes and soft words spoken at covert-side years before. For a time all these things may have been forgotten amidst the bustle and worry of every-day life abroad; but let the whimper of even a single hound be heard, and those memories that have slumbered perhaps for years in the heart of the true sportsman will awaken, and as the sweet music of the pack rises and swells in volume, scenes that have long been forgotten will return again to his eyes as vividly as though they had disappeared but yesterday—scenes both bright and sad.

How well I remember a somewhat pathetic incident I was a witness to when engaged as honorary whip to the Johannesburg Hunt Club. I was posted at the end of a big blue-gum plantation, to view away any buck that might break that way. There was but one other person waiting at that end of the covert, an old man mounted on a rough, ill-kept Basuto pony, whom I had often noticed loafing about the horse-market of Johannesburg, or lounging outside drinking saloons, with a bundle of so-called racing tips in his hands. Hounds had hardly spoken when I heard the sound of loud, choking sobs, as though of some one in dire distress, and, turning in my saddle, I saw the old man with head bowed down over his pony's neck, and the tears streaming through his bony, sun-burnt fingers. Imagining the man to be ill, I rode up to him and inquired what was the matter; but, with a gesture, he signalled me not to approach nearer, and in a hoarse, broken voice exclaimed, 'Don't take

any notice of me, sir. I am a weak old fool, but the cry of those hounds reminded me of the dear old home I left twenty-five years ago.' Would the most eloquent sermon ever preached from the pulpit have touched that world-beaten heart as did the music of that little exiled pack of foxhounds? I am afraid not.

But, hark to that ringing view-hallo on the far side of the covert. Something has gone away, and at this early hour of the day I warrant the veldt holds a breast-high scent, and we shall have to ride hard if we wish to keep on terms with the flying darlings. Mark that small deer-like animal going across that bare patch of veldt with a series of graceful bucking bounds and leaps. It is a blesbok, and he heads for yonder distant line of steep brown kopjes. Parker has his hounds out of covert in a 'twinkling,' and away they stream over the level at a pace seldom shown in the old country, for the recent heavy rains have rendered the veldt as good going as could be wished, and fences, walls, and banks have not to be negotiated by the pack. The M.F.H. and huntsman are well up with their hounds, and the ladies hold their own with the best of us. Suddenly the dappled beauties disappear into the discoloured waters of a wide, brimming spruit, and then, with a shake of their sterns and hackles, clamber up the far bank, and again their joyful music re-echoes across the plains.

Girth and girth the master and huntsman fly the obstacle, and two of the fair sportswomen also land safely on the right side of the water; but not so their pilot, an ex-cavalry officer, whose mount, a big Cape stallion, refuses to jump, and the gallant Major takes an involuntary header into the muddy depths of the spruit, to be fished out a few moments later by some good Samaritan.

The rest of the followers, most of whom are mounted on ponies, manage to scramble over the water somehow, and helter-skelter we go, through sage-bush and waist-high veldt grass, each man striving to get on terms with the still flying pack, which are a good quarter of a mile ahead of us, and so well do they hunt together that the proverbial sheet would cover them.

'Hold up, Zulu!' is the cry as my pony puts a foot into an ant-bear earth, and very nearly gives me a 'purler;' but the clever little animal recovers himself, and, with a snort, puts on pace to pass the grey Free Stater he has been showing his heels to ever since the start.

Hullo! Parker has gone a fearful crasher, for his mount has

turned a complete somersault ; but Tom knows how to fall, and is soon in the saddle again.

Hounds have been running hard for twenty-five minutes without the slightest check, but appear to have got but little nearer the quarry, and they will have to strain every nerve and muscle to gain their 'blood,' for already the big boulders are visible on yonder kopjes, towards which the buck is making, and if once he gains the safe harbourage of those hills he will save his 'slots,' for no horse ever yet foaled could find footing upon the sides of those rocky heights, and the staunchest and keenest-nosed hounds ever whelped would find it a difficult task to hunt game so swift and nimble as the blesbok amongst those loose rocks and huge boulders.

But surely hounds have come to a check at that shallow, reed-fringed dam which lies shimmering under the rays of the early morning sun like a sheet of molten silver. The buck has either soiled there or is at bay.

Hounds have hit off the line again, for that crash of music proclaims the fact. Yes, the buck is in that clump of bamboo-reeds, and now old Amazon has him. No, by Jove! he has gored her with a stroke of his needle-like horns, and, with a bound, he jumped clear of the reeds into the very midst of the pack which thirst for his blood, and in a moment the gallant little animal is pulled down by Guardsman. So ends a good twenty-five minutes' burst I enjoyed with the only pack of English foxhounds that ever crossed the Transvaal border.

'HORSE CHESTNUTS.'

Told by DERRY GORE, and Edited by MAURICE NOEL.

THE gentleman to whom I am indebted for the following anecdotes assures me that they relate to incidents which occurred within his personal knowledge, or were recounted to him by his father, a well-known sportsman in the North of England, intimately acquainted, in his day, with many men and most matters connected with the Turf.

He modestly calls them 'Chestnuts,' but I confidently hope that the readers of *Sporting Notes* will not find them to be 'twice-told tales.'—EDITOR.

COLONEL NORTH AND PERSIMMON.

IT may not be generally known, that the ownership of Persimmon hung in the balance—for one moment only—on the occasion of a visit paid by Colonel North to Sandringham in 1894.

Whilst looking over the Prince of Wales's stud, the Colonel was greatly taken with the appearance of the yearling colt by St. Simon—*Pérdita II.*, afterwards so well known to fame, and offered 2000*l.* for him on the spot. This was refused, but the Colonel could not get the colt out of his head, and speaking of him later, in the presence of the Princess, he said: 'I've seen nothing I fancy so much for a long time, and would willingly add another to my original offer.'

'Which do you mean?' asked the Princess, smiling; 'another sovereign, or another thousand?'

'Another thousand,' replied the Colonel. 'I'd give 3000*l.* for the colt.'

The Prince looked round. 'Do you mean that?' he asked.

'I *did*,' returned the Colonel, 'but on second thoughts, if you'll allow me, Sir, I'll withdraw my offer altogether, and for this reason: I never saw a colt that, to my mind, looked so likely to prove a Derby winner, and if he should win that race under any colours but yours, it would be a national calamity.'

The Princess was much pleased by this little speech, and softly applauded with her hands as she said, 'Very well spoken, Colonel North.'

When in 1895, Persimmon made his successful *début* at Ascot, Colonel North sent the following message to H. R. H.: 'Congratulations on the success of *our* horse'—to which he received a prompt reply of thanks, the Prince saying that he perfectly remembered the incident.

'NO PAPER, TOMMY!'

ON the Epsom course, if the wind has any fancy for whistling 'o'er the downs so free,' there is nothing to prevent it from doing so, and, on a certain day in April, some years ago, it not only *had* such a fancy, but was indulging it without any regard for the comfort of the crowd assembled to see the running for the 'City and Suburban.' It behaved like a practical joker—and a rough one at that; and after blowing a lot of

umbrellas inside out, and sending innumerable hats flying all over the course, it looked out for something better to do.

The great race was over, and the one that succeeded it was just being started, when an over-dressed, flash-looking individual hustled up to one of the bookies in the ring, and held out a ten-pound note.

'I'll take 80 to 10,' he shouted, 'Diadem to win,' pointing at the same time to the bookie's list of prices. It was just after flag-fall when this happened, and the bookie hurriedly took the note. As he did so, however, he happened to look at the man who had given it, when, instead of repeating the bet to his clerk, and handing over a voucher, he held up the tenner, and let it drop from between his fingers, at the same time shouting in a voice that could be heard above the roar of the ring, 'No paper, Tommy!'

This was the very opportunity the wind was looking out for! Whirling past in a furious gust, it caught the note as the bookie released it, sent it flying out of the ring, across the course, and sailing away over the crowd that was watching the race from the hill.

With open mouth and staring eyes, the man who had tendered it watched it till it had been carried out of his sight, and at that moment the horses swept past the post, and Diadem won by a length!

Instead of indulging in appropriate language, the would-be backer replied to the satisfied nod of the bookie by a sickly smile, and then slunk away.

'Who would have thought,' he soliloquised, as he made his way to the Epsom Downs Station, 'that he would have remembered the flash one I landed him with two years ago at Chester. What humping luck, just as the blooming horse rolled home, too! And the tenner he chucked to-day was one of the best that ever came out of the Bank of England.'

Some years after this, Tommy, who meanwhile had come into some money, and developed into a 'respectable member of society,' came across the same bookie in the smoking-room of an hotel, and said, 'You paid me out at Epsom for that other little business, but the note I offered you then was a right 'un.'

'How was I to know?' returned the bookie; 'I thought you were *made* of bad paper.'

'Well, well, I couldn't complain, I know, and I didn't, but I lost a good tenner that day.'

‘That’s all right, isn’t it?’ cried the bookie; ‘I saved a good eighty!’

‘I know you did, returned the other thoughtfully, ‘but I’ve often wondered who the devil picked up that note!’

A FAMOUS JOCKEY’S TENNER.

STANDING drinks was *not* one of the famous one’s amiable weaknesses. Perhaps he considered that (on a racecourse particularly) his pals ought to stand to him, and be glad to do so.

On a certain occasion, however, he found himself at a bar beneath one of the stands at some big meeting, and the two friends he was with insisted on his paying the shot, ‘just for once,’ as they said. He tried to get out of it, for a time, and at last said, ‘I’ve nothing less than a tenner with me.’

‘What’s the matter with that?’ cried his friends; ‘they only charge half a sov. for a bottle of fiz, and you’ll get some change. A man has no right to go about without change in his pocket.’

Well, they chaffed him into it, so he produced his tenner, the champagne came and disappeared, but our jockey received no change. So he held out his hand for it to the young lady behind the bar.

She shook it warmly, and said, ‘Glad to see you, Mr. —; I thought you had quite forgotten me.’

‘Of course I haven’t,’ he replied, ‘but you’ve forgotten to give me the change.’

‘What change?’

‘Why the change for my tenner.’

‘Oh, there’s no change left out of *that*,’ said the young lady sweetly.

‘What on earth do you mean?’

‘Why, don’t you remember last time you rode here, you said you had put me on ten pounds to nothing on your mount. Well, you won!’

‘I declare,’ he stammered, ‘I’ve almost forgotten——’

‘But I haven’t, so that really you owe me ten shillings still: however, I’ll be satisfied with nine pound ten, *now that I’ve got it!* Are you going, Mr. —? Well, good-bye, good luck, so many thanks. Ta-ta!’

‘Expensive drink that!’ whispered one of his friends as they left.

WORMING IT OUT.

OVER the Great Ebor Handicap some time ago, a certain penciller had considerably overlaid his book against one particular horse, which he had made up his mind was a dead 'un.

A couple of days before the race, however, a whisper went round to the effect that the animal was nothing like as 'stiff' as he supposed him to be, and whilst he was still feeling nervous about his bets, and uncertain what to do, he happened to be introduced to the 'Fidus Achates' of the stable to which the horse in question belonged, and for which he worked the commissions.

'I'll let myself loose on him,' thought the metalician, 'and worm it out.'

So he invited the other to dine, explaining that it would be a pity to waste the dinner he had ordered—the best the hotel could produce—but that as the friend he expected had wired to say he was prevented from coming, it would certainly be wasted unless he could be persuaded to take the place of the absentee.

Little pressing was needed, and after a sumptuous dinner, with wines to match, the pair retired to the smoking-room, and drank earnestly.

Having put away enough liquor to make any man 'talk of his relations,' the guest ultimately reached the point at which he was unable to talk at all. His entertainer, with the help of the hall porter, the boots, and two chamber-maids, managed to get him to bed, and then retired to his own room to think.

His reflections were not pleasant. 'The cuss is as drunk as Noah! My own head feels like a bursting shell. Six pounds will hardly settle the bill, and what have I got for it? Not a d——d thing! Tried him at every stage of intoxication too! I said I'd worm it out, didn't I? He's made a worm of me—here—stop that bed!'

He managed to get into it as it circled round, and woke considerably better. Then a brilliant idea occurred to him, and he repaired to his friend's room with a tumbler of soda and milk.

'Here's something that will do you good,' he said, when he had succeeded in waking him. 'I know how you must feel!'

Whilst the 'cuss' was lapping feverishly at the drink, he went to the door and turned the key. Then, coming back, he said in a low confidential voice, 'A bit of a booze is no harm. I've

tried it myself ; but when a man wants to keep a thing dark, it's a mistake.'

'You don't mean to say,' exclaimed the other, with his tongue still rattling in his mouth, 'that I let out——'

'Let out !' interrupted the bookie, 'I should think you did ! How else should I know what a cert you've got ?'

'Then, for the Lord's sake don't let any one else know,' said the victim of thirst, imploringly.

'I'll promise not to, if you'll be straight with me—*is* it the good thing you said it was ?'

'The best we ever had,' returned the other, with a groan, as he sank back on his pillow.

And it came off too—so the bookie made a good meeting of it.

TWO EMPRESSES.

EMPRESS, who won the Grand National in 1880, amidst the frantic yells of the Irish Brigade, received her name in honour of the late Empress of Austria, who, during one of her visits to the Emerald Isle for the hunting season, inspected the Eyrefield Lodge stables.

This was after the mare had been named, and Her Majesty, wishing to see the animal closely, was inspecting her in her box, when the trainer, Mr. H. E. Linde, suddenly went off into a fit of laughter.

'What are you laughing at, Mr. Linde ?' asked the Empress of Austria.

'At the funniest thing I've ever seen !' replied Mr. Linde, who never tired of telling the story afterwards. 'I beg your Majesty's pardon, but it *is* amusing to see two live Empresses in one box !'

So certain did Mr. Linde feel of winning the Grand National with his mare, that, on the morning of the race, he wrote the following telegram in readiness to be sent to the Empress of Austria immediately after it was run : 'Empress has won the Grand National. Your Majesty brought me luck.'

The naming of another famous chaser belonging to Mr. Linde was also connected with the Empress of Austria. Her Majesty was watching the horse referred to, when, as a two-year-old, he was being schooled over fences, and was so delighted with the splendid form in which he jumped that she exclaimed, 'Oh, he's too good !' So he was named 'Too Good' on the spot, and many of them afterwards found him so.

MAKING HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES.

A SPORTSMAN, very well known on the turf in later years, was staying at Whitby in his young days, and from there made up his mind to run over to Doncaster for the Leger week. But, after deducting what was necessary for expenses, he found he had only thirty shillings left, and went roaming about the paddock, 'rather low down among the bow-wows,' as he put it.

Meeting an old friend, however, he said, as he handed him his little all, 'Look here, I want to put a couple of pounds on such-and-such a horse, but I've only got thirty shillings. Make it up to two pounds, like a good fellow, and put it on for me. If I lose, I'll go home, and send you the money.'

'Right you are!' replied his friend. 'I'll go straight off and back him for you.'

The horse won, and the youngster's friend shortly appeared, and handed him six pounds ten, after deducting his own half-sov., the price obtained having been 5 to 2.

'What next?' he asked.

'Lump the winnings on Bushy Park!' cried the youngster, handing him a fiver.

Bushy Park winning at 7 to 1, the youthful plunger found himself with forty pounds to play with. Of this, with unusual prudence, he kept five pounds, and then took 100 to 7 five times about Lumberer for the next race. And when Lumberer romped home, an easy winner, this good young man tempted Fortune no further, but romped home himself, an easy winner of 540 golden sovereigns, collected during an hour and a half of sunshine.

A *VERY* STRAIGHT TIP.

IT was during the York August meeting in the early eighties that a well-known sportsman in the North of England was strolling about the paddock with his son, to whom he was pointing out all the celebrities.

'There's Lord Falmouth,' said paterfamilias.

Well up already in the principal events of history (Turf History), the young 'un feasted his eyes on the magnate with whom were associated such names as those of Kingcraft, Silvio, Spinaway, Wheel of Fortune, Jeannette, &c., and could not persuade himself to move on. Lord Falmouth had a horse running in the approaching race, for which the saddling bell had rung some time, but Fred Archer, who was riding for his Lordship,

was rather late. Presently, however, the jockey hurried past on the way to his mount, the paddock being nearly empty.

'Going to win, Archer?' called Lord Falmouth after him.

'Oh, no, my Lord!' replied his jockey; 'Charlie Wood's sure to win this.'

'Come on,' muttered paterfamilias, clutching his son's arm; 'I mean doing record time to Tatt's!' And presently he was hard at work booking 'fives' about Mr. Jack Hammond's Strathblane, on which Charlie Wood had an easy win.

STANDING ON VELVET.

THIRTY years ago the Great Yorkshire Handicap was a *much* more important event than it is at present. One night, some little time before the race, a party of well-known sportsmen, including Captain Thomas Upton, of the Yorkshire Hussars, were dining together, and discussing the chances of the horses entered for it. There were thirty-seven acceptances, and no hot favourites—a state of things which suggested sporting bets.

Now it happened that the youngest member of the party had received information as to the excellent chance of a rank outsider, and, having a prejudice (which is shared by most of us) in favour of 'standing on velvet,' he turned the matter over in his mind whilst the others were proclaiming their fancies, keeping his ears cocked all the time, in case the name of his particular horse should be mentioned, which it was *not*.

At last some one cried, 'I'll take seven horses against the field for a level hundred!'

'I'll do the same,' said the man sitting next to the speaker.

'Done with both of you,' said the youngster, 'on one condition.'

'What may that be?' asked Captain Upton.

'Only that each must write down his seven horses without consultation.'

This being agreed to, the bets were on, and the two lists were written and handed over to the youngster, who read them out. As it happened, neither list contained the name of a horse written on the other.

So the youngster found himself with both feet on the 'Wilton pile,' since he stood to win 200*l.* to nothing.

But, although the name of his own fancy did not appear in

either of the lists, he was not quite satisfied, so he took 100*l.* to one about it, and before the race came off booked two other bets—one of 100*l.* to thirty shillings, and another of the same to three pounds.

It is hardly necessary to add that his horse won, for otherwise this veracious anecdote would have remained unrecorded.

MANCHESTER CUP, 1881.

THE race, of all others, which Fred Archer most enjoyed winning was the 'Manchester Cup' of 1881. He had been particularly anxious to get the mount on Sir John Astley's horse, Peter; but 'Jolly Sir John' was too good a sportsman to make his own jockey—Charlie Wood—'stand down.'

Archer was rather nettled at having to take a refusal, and made up his mind to win the cup in spite of anything Peter or Wood might do. So he went off to Captain Machell, and asked him why he was letting the cup go.

'How letting it go?' asked the Captain. 'What do you mean?'

'I mean that you could win it with Valour, if you wanted to.'

'Don't you believe it,' returned the Captain, 'it's beyond his distance.'

'A little, perhaps,' said Archer.

'More than a little; it's a very trying mile and three-quarters, and Valour's distance is half a mile less than that.'

'So some of them say,' replied Archer, 'but I think he can stay a bit further. I could squeeze it out of him, I know.'

'Think so?'

'I'm sure of it.'

'Well,' said the Captain, after a little more talk, 'you can ride the horse if you like.'

Ride him he did—like a demon, and when Valour won by a neck from Peter, people declared that Fred Archer had never ridden a finer race in his life. But it was a severe blow to Sir John.

COLONEL NORTH AND NUNTHORPE.

COLONEL NORTH's trainer was rather against running Nunthorpe for the Lincoln Handicap, on the ground that the horse was

not quite fit, and had a big weight to carry ; but as he had been backed for a bit, the Colonel decided to start him. The horse came in fourth. Said the Colonel to himself : ' If he *had* been fit, he'd have won. I'll run him for the City and Suburban.'

For this he took 14 to 1 about him in thousands, and, with Morny Cannon in the saddle, Nunthorpe won.

By so doing, he incurred a penalty of 14 lbs. (or thereabouts) for the Kempton Park Jubilee Stakes, and the stable came to the conclusion that, under the circumstances, they could pull out something more likely to win. So they betted accordingly, leaving Nunthorpe out in the cold. His trainer told the Colonel in confidence, that he had something over a stone better than Nunthorpe *at the weights*.

'How can you tell?' cried the Colonel, hugely disgusted. 'You know I never allow my horses to be tried with other people's!'

Well, the Colonel preferred to go by the opinion of Morny Cannon, who had told him that the horse won easily at Epsom, and would win again. He accordingly booked the nice bet of 17,000 to 1000.

On the day of the race, Colonel North found Nunthorpe in the paddock, unattended by the trainer, for whom he sent, making use at the same time of somewhat violent language. On the arrival of the latter, however, *in a hurry*, he was soon appeased, and offered him a pony at the good odds he had obtained himself, but the trainer didn't care about it.

'Then you're a fool for your pains,' observed the Colonel.

A royal Duke, however, who was with the Colonel at the time, took the tip, and got 16 fifties to one about Nunthorpe, who (as it is now matter of history), landed the odds against him. After the race, young Robert Sherwood stood at the horse's head whilst the jockey was being weighed in, and the Colonel could not forbear chaffing him.

'Glad you've had a good race, Robert.'

No answer.

'Hear you've won a fortune.'

Still no answer.

'Come now, was it three or five hundred you had on him?'

This was too much for Robert, who, with the tears almost coming into his eyes, blurted out : 'S'elp me, Colonel, you're in such form now, that you could win with a blooming donkey!'

WARM WANDERINGS.

By KIRLY HARE.



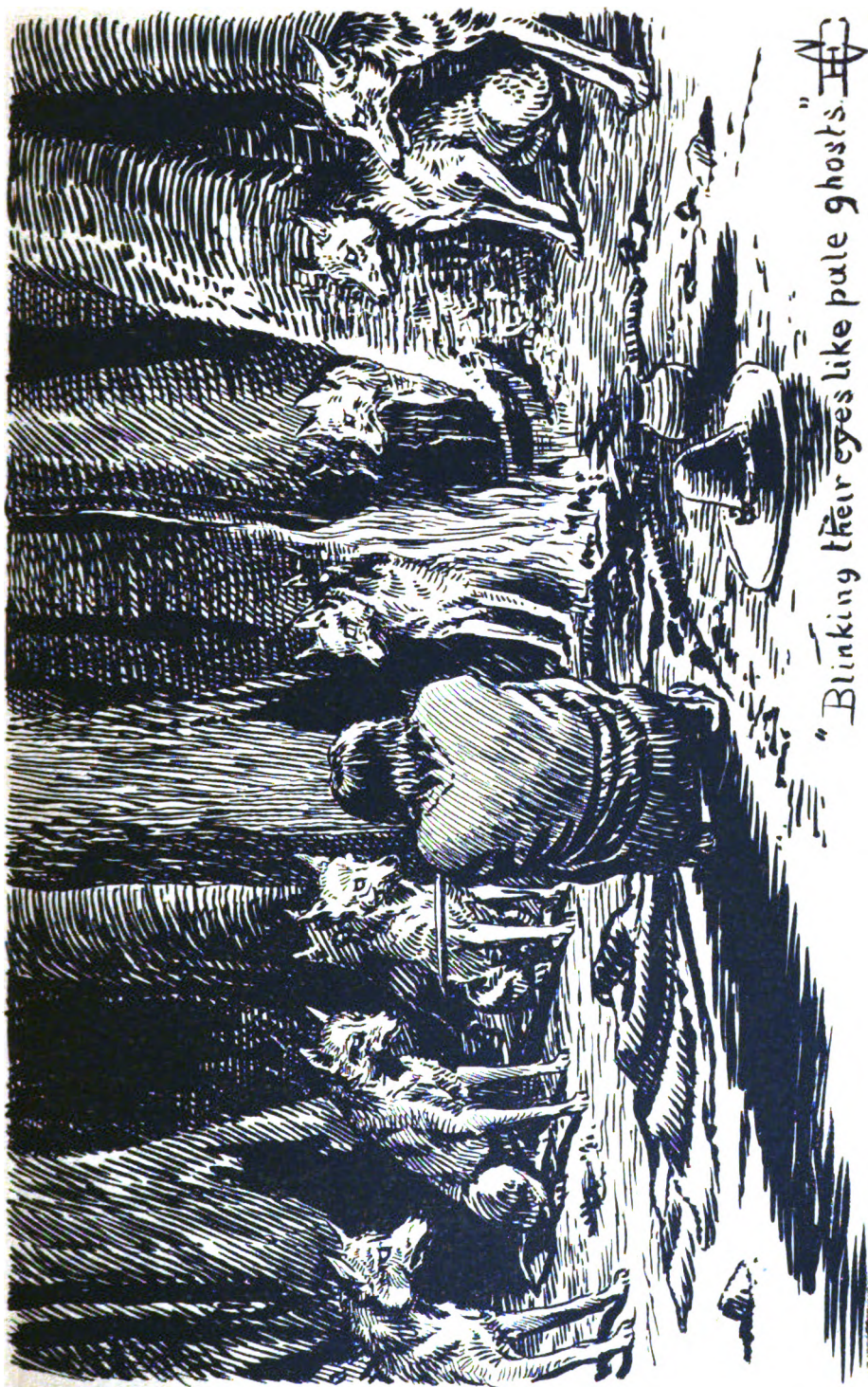
AS it was a matter of indifference which way I wandered, so long as I enjoyed some kind of sport and saw the country (Central America), I agreed, for the time being, to be taken in tow by Gassy. For the moment, he and my Indian compadre, Manuelé, were paying me a visit at my temporary shanty in the forest, and we were engaged getting dinner ready. Our cooking might not have suited high-toned artists, but, nevertheless, we always felt very proud of it, and never had indigestion.


'This here's mighty powerful baking-powder,' remarked Gassy. 'The dough I put to rise seems to want to go up the chimney and out-o'-window. It did make a start for the door, only I managed to head the beggar off just in time. What in thunder's name is the matter with the blooming thing?'

'Chop it in two,' said I, 'and make half into a light dumpling.' To tell Gassy that he had been much too liberal with the baking-powder would simply have caused wrathful denials. 'Now,' I continued, 'perhaps you can inform me which is the best way to cook this hideous monster. He must have been a bold man who first ventured to eat such a frightful beast.'

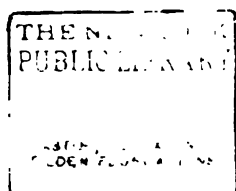
On the day before, I had been for a short hunt in the forest. About the drowsiest hour of the tropic afternoon, from two to three, when tiny bright-winged flies seemed the only things awake, I fell sound asleep, the awakening from which somewhat startled me. A soft body fell heavily upon my legs, flop! Before I could move more than my eyelids, some long, scaly, cold and slimy creature scrambled straight up over my body. I was lying against a tree-trunk, up which the creature went post-haste, tearing the flesh of my neck and face with razor-like claws *en route*. After wiping the blood from forehead and eyes, I looked up. There, on a thick branch just overhead, reclined my late visitor, a six-foot iguana.

One distended claw was buried in the bark, the red and rusty-black barred tail hung down from the branch, and one vigilant eye winked impudently at me. I concluded that it had



"Blinking their eyes like pale ghosts." 

see page 102.



been asleep and tumbled off its perch owing to a bad attack of nightmare. Those big lizards being subject to unpleasant dreams, become such practised acrobats that they never hurt themselves. This particular one had damaged *me*, especially my beauty, so I made up my mind to eat him, though by no means a tempting morsel to look at. A long lank body, rough and flabby ; a repulsive-looking head with red crest like human fingers with no bones in them, and alligator-like legs armed with sharp claws.

It was, however, of the sort most approved by local epicures, so I rolled him off the branch with a bullet through the brain, and then sat down to cool myself with a pipe. In a tropical forest, amidst all the beauty and solemnity of scenery, Nature's dire drama is played unceasingly, and in a few minutes the curtain rose upon one of its scenes of ruthless tragedy.

'Tweet ! tweety !' chirped a jungle rabbit, poking its droll red head from a hole some twenty yards away on my left. The short fore-legs, round sleek body, and kangaroo-like hind-quarters quickly followed the head. Merrily the bunny hopped about, then squeaked a cry of alarm, and another actor came to the front.

Upon the rustic stage glided a snake, appearing, sparkling in the sun, and vanishing among stones and leaves. Like a polished necklace of jet and coral and pearl, it slowly wound itself onwards with black-and-scarlet head raised, and eyes fixed on its prey. It was the deadly 'coral.' The rabbit, with frightened glances all around, cried his note of alarm continuously, and a second head popped out from the hole. This last was the doe, with a nest of young behind her in the burrow. Uttering a faint cry, as of farewell to her mate, she withdrew into the hole, and the jewel-like body of the snake flashed in after her, while the buck rabbit still hopped helplessly hither and thither outside.

From the hole came faint sounds of a struggle. Then the doe leapt weakly out, bearing round her neck a 'coral' necklace, glittering with rings of brightest colours—pearl, red, and black—daintily enamelled by Nature's blood-stained hand. Within a foot of the entrance she rolled over ; the snake unwound itself, hissed at the buck rabbit, and was duly damned and knocked on the head by the solitary spectator. To prove whether or not the coral's bite instantly solidified the blood, I severed the jugular and carotid of the victim. No blood flowed. Both arteries were

filled with a thick purple jelly. The story then, which all in those parts firmly believed, was perfectly true.

My part in the drama ended in the conveyance of *my* prey to *my* den, moralising the while upon Nature's steadily played tragedy, the horrible simplicity of its plot—'Eat or be eaten'—and the lesson it taught—'Do to each other as you would *not* be done by.' The morals of a healthy cannibal struck me as being exactly in accordance with the ethics of Dame Nature, and this happy thought gave me a hearty appetite, naturally. And now we were going to devour my six-foot victim when suitably cooked.

'Give the beast to the Injun; he's cooked many a one, you bet,' said Gassy, in answer to my culinary question; 'and mind he doesn't forget the onion sauce.' The sauce was duly seen to, and my Indian compadre proved himself an excellent iguana cook.

'What do you think it tastes like?' I asked Gassy.

'Something like squir'l, with a flavour of sturgeon and a touch of fricasseed frog. First-rate prog, ain't it?' responded Gassy, with his mouth full.

'And you, Manuelé?' I asked the Indian.

'I? What is it that you wish, señor?'

'What does the iguana taste to you like, my friend?'

'Like iguana. Why should it not taste so? And it is a very good taste,' replied my compadre, helping himself to a second huge plateful, a proportionate slice of Gassy's patent yeast-powder bread, and half a square foot of light dumpling.

That iguana was so delicious that the too bountiful banquet gave me nightmare, and at about 3 a.m. next morning I went out into the open air to cool my rampaging dream-evolving brains. Steamy sheets of vapour floated over the ground; not a star was visible—nothing but black darkness. Feeling the way with my feet, I suddenly found myself grabbed hold of by two muscular arms, which closed round me liked iron cables.

'Tsh!' whispered the voice of my compadre, in a note of warning.

'What is it?' I asked, in the same guarded tone.

'Coyotés, señor!'

'Are you afraid of coyotés, Manuelé?' I asked in surprise.

'Si! Tengo miedo!' he answered simply.

The tone seemed to rebuke my ignorant woodcraft, and I pondered on it. Presently, from the far end of the ridge, a low

whimper broke upon the silent night, and, from the opposite quarter, another answered it. Then, low and softly musical, from all points of the compass, rose the gentle murmuring of the pack. Roused by recollections of old home days, I made a movement, instantly checked.

‘Steady, for your life!’ the Indian breathed in my ear.

Having perfect faith in my compadre’s courage and woodcraft, I wondered why we should be alarmed at cowardly coyotés. Nevertheless I stole back to the hut for rifle and other equipment, and then resumed my place beside the Indian.

The silence that had followed the coyoté-chorus of whimpers was now suddenly broken. A clear bell-like challenge, softened but unmistakable, came to the listening ear; and, unless it was simply imagination, I thought I could hear the rush of many paws pattering over rocks and dewy grass. Another silence, so still that I could hear the beat of my statue-like companion’s heart, followed by a second and a third challenge rung out less clearly. And then, after another pause, the whimpering was resumed.

‘We are safe for the present,’ said Manuelé. ‘It is all right now, but you will hear them loud enough presently. They are just turning the river, señor.’

‘What on earth do you mean? Why should they turn the river?’ I asked, wondering. ‘The coyotés hit off the scent all right, why are they not now in full cry? They can’t have lost it.’

‘They are sending on some of their best dogs to head back the game if it should take to water, as it is pretty sure to do. Coyotés can swim well; but they do not like water. In half an hour you will hear them give cry again, and perhaps see them bring their game in, if you care to wait.’

We walked up the ridge, and waited—as comfortably as might be. In due course came a sudden coyoté outburst, as if some scout had just come in from the front. The clamorous throats, reckless and unguarded now, made merry melody. They were running the trail, full cry. Through the forest to our left, across the wind, swept the pack; each rising gust bringing us the cheery coyoté music. Above the dark horizon to the southward the mountain tops, rosy and purple, hung like coloured lamps in the black sky; the light quickly spreading eastward, and the mountain tops fading amongst the clouds. And Manuelé shivered in the chill morning air.

'Will the coyotés come back here?' I asked.

'Of course, and bring their game with them to their dens. If they did not, how would the pups and heavy bitches fare? And those that were sent away to the low land last night to head the game back, are they to get no share for their hard work?'

'How long will they be, do you think?'

'It depends on the game. If it be a drove of pigs, they might not be long; if a fine deer, it would be very much longer.'

So we sat and waited and smoked, while the sun rose and mounted up. Crickets and tree-frogs chirruped, monkeys chattered, and parrots croaked. Macaws flashed like flames of scarlet fire about the tallest trees, screaming. A half-grown boar came and peeped at us, and bounded away, grunting. At length came a faint clamour, as of coyotés; and a few minutes later came a tall buck, his coat all staring and wet, his tongue hanging low, and bounded across an open glade; then vanished in the forest. Nearer came the cry of the pack in pursuit; at top speed they swept along the trail, all well together, with heads up high and bushy tails waving, across the glade, into the arches of forest. In a few minutes there was a crashing of undergrowth and the buck, labouring terribly, broke cover at the foot of the ridge and ran along the forest on the left. The coyotés' cry rang out triumphantly, louder and louder, and then they too appeared, running the trail without a check, fresh almost as at the beginning.

Trailing after the compact mass of twelve or fourteen couple of grown dogs, which formed the pack, were four or five heavy bitches and a dozen sturdy pups. These had evidently only just joined the chase, for they were playing and biting one another. A moment later there was a check. On the edge of the forest the leader raised his muzzle and howled, and every coyoté pulled up. After sniffing about a bit, the leader uttered a sharp whine. The pack opened like a fan, while the bitches and pups fell far to the rear. Scarcely had the last of the pack vanished in the undergrowth—pups and bitches standing still as statues in their places—when a short challenge rang out. A moment's pause (while the old dogs verified the fact, I suppose), and a bolder cry proclaimed that all was well. The pups and bitches dashed off to join the pack, and the merry music broke out again, full cry. And we saw them no more. But the buck could not have run another quarter of a mile.

To drive a grown buck to his starting-place ; to send on a portion of the pack to that point where he would strive to break cover ; to head him again and again back into the forest, where speed could not be fully exerted, were feats which might well puzzle the best hounds in England. Yet the despised coyoté had done it, and done it in a way that no 'scientific' training could have bettered in any one single feature. It was a wonderful work and a wonderful sight, and suggested curious 'scientific' reflections.

'And now,' said I to Manuelé, as we walked back to the hut, 'tell me why you were so frightened when I came upon you this morning.'

'It is terrible to be beset by coyotés when one is alone and the pack is out,' replied the Indian, with eyes staring straight in front, as though his mind saw some former scene of horror. 'They are worse than tigers or cowardly pumas, and are not afraid of fire. They sit like ghosts, like pale devils, never moving, never taking their shining eyes from your face. Ah ! it is a terrible nightmare !'

'Have you ever been beset by them like that ?' I asked.

'Si, señor—once. Pray the saints I may never have such a night again ! I was camping all by myself, on my road to Segovia Viejo. At that time—and it is not so long ago—I should have laughed, like yourself, had any one bid me fear the dogs. Yet I had lived in the woods all my life. Well, I built a fire, cooked some charqui, and lay down to sleep, for I was very weary. About midnight I was awake by something breathing on my face. I sprang to my feet, and saw a pale beast as it vanished in the darkness. I looked about, and saw a circle of pale beasts all around my fire, staring at me with eyes that shone like emeralds. I thought it must be a dream. Then I saw that they were coyotés, and laughed aloud. I threw a stick at one and hit him hard. He made no sound, only moved back a few inches. I ran at them with my machete, and they slid away into the darkness, gently as oil from water, and I came back laughing. But they came back, too ; and I drove them off again, many times, till I felt tired out and dead sleepy. Each time did they come back quicker and creep closer, with burning eyes always on me, till I began to shiver.'

'Had you not your gun ?' I asked.

'No, señor ; only my machete.'

'Was there no tree you could have climbed ?'

'No, nothing. There were trees, but with trunks too large to climb. Well, I pretended to sleep, watching; and they sat quite still, blinking their eyes like pale ghosts; and the sweat poured from me, and the hair of my flesh began to stand up. Then the leader rose up and moved closer; and they all rose up and came closer many times, moving a few inches each time, till the big leader was but two feet from my face. His eyes blazed like green lamps, his lips were drawn back, and his teeth were set. I could bear it no longer. With a loud cry I sprang to my feet and rushed upon them with my machete, and they fled. Then my weariness overpowered me and I slept. My dreams were horrid. I saw a crowd of giant coyotés creeping at me, closer and closer—and I awoke. Gran Dios! my dream was true! There squatted the pale devils, close round me, watching my face. I felt too tired to move, and that I *must* sleep; and then—a roar, that made the ground under me quiver and shake,* rose from out of the darkness and died away. Few men there are who have blessed God to hear the voice of a jaguar, but I cried out my thanksgiving aloud—for the voice that had roared was that of a jaguar. The coyotés rushed past me, and went away quick into the darkness. I did not feel at all fearful of the tiger. I believed Heaven had sent him to save my life from the coyotés, and I felt sure he would not hurt me. So I went to sleep, guarded by my preserver. It seems odd, does it not? But so it was, for next morning I found the tiger's trail circling round and round my fire. But I have never forgotten those coyotés, and it makes me tremble to hear the cry of the pale devils when I am out alone in the darkness.'

'The moral of that yarn,' observed Gassy, when I told him the Indian's adventure as we ate breakfast, 'is to always carry firearms, and, where possible, camp under a climbable tree.'

'Manuelé has always lived in the forest,' I said, 'and life in the forest, as you and I both know, begets an enormous tendency to moralise. But morals are out of date, and even an Indian knows, I expect, that a moral does not adorn a tale. So he left it out.'

'Well, his jaguar guardian-angel is a bit too hot, anyhow. I don't believe in spasmodical providences. But hang all that bosh. Will you come with me to-morrow to Ometepe?''

'If there's any sport there and it's not too far.'

'Why, it's close by, on the lake; and the jaguars of Ometepe are as large as Indian tigers,' declared Gassy, most

untruthfully, as usual. 'And it's celebrated, or was once, for the beauty of its women,' he added, by way of further inducement to me.

Three or four days later, just at dawn, we embarked upon the lake Nicaragua. One hundred and twenty miles in length, forty-five in breadth, it stretched away around us—west, north, and south—like an inland sea. From a reedy creek overshadowed with big black trees, tall canes, and plummy rushes—the haunt of cranes, alligators, and eel-like snakes—we pushed out our canoe and worked our way into the open water amongst huge spotted sharks. Steadily we paddled along all the morning towards the tall peak of Ometepe, sailed most of the afternoon, and then found ourselves under Ometepe's palm-crowned shore; and coasted past green sheltered coves, groves of palm, wild orchards of luscious fruit, green fields of grass and pale fields of indigo, till the sun went down behind the mountain.

The trees, clothing the cone from base to summit, showed wondrous lights and shadows. The foliage hanging above our heads took a thousand new tints, while the dazzling glow on rock and 'scar' was radiantly reflected in the still water. The ridges of the volcano, and the hills of Chontales over which I had lately wandered, shone with glowing prismatic colour, till the last flush died suddenly in the sky, and we beached our canoe under the pale-green branches of a solemn ceiba-tree and jumped ashore, feeling ready for supper.

Up the hill was a village, towards which we climbed till hitting a narrow path with Indian girls going along it. They were not beauties—coarse hair, inky-looking eyes, ugly features, huge heads, ungraceful figures, and——

'No,' said Gassy, 'they're not what they used to be; that's a pretty plain undeniable fact.'

Among fruit-trees, palms and flowers, outside a creeper-twined palm-thatched hut, we ate our supper of venison pasty. The daughters of the hut—half-naked young ladies crowned with orchids and scarlet flowers—brought tortillas, and wished to hear the news, which Gassy invented smilingly and reeled off till the young ladies felt sleepy. Then we lit our pipes and started for a stroll by the light of the moon. After looking about him, and a pause of consideration, Gassy led the way down a narrow lane, bordered on one side by forest, on the other by a row of mighty organo cacti-stems—column-like shafts over three feet round and about twenty feet in height.

Presently we came to a pit-like sinister-looking dell, black as night.

'A likely spot for a jaguar!' I observed.

'One was there not so very long ago,' said Gassy.

'Did he do any mischief? It's close to the village.'

'Rather! Look, here's the spot he broke cover. He crawled out from this thicket, by that gap in the bank where the moon-beams are shining, and crouched along the open in sight of everybody. Come along up to the meadow above, to the old graveyard, and I'll tell you how that jaguar killed an infernal Indian who had just murdered a particular chum of mine.'

Emerging from the dell we climbed a rocky slope crowned by a belt of tall trees, which, with a wall of pebbles, protected the repose of the old heathen bones. The graveyard was unmarked by grave or cairn or statue, but the ground beneath—as every soul on Ometepe knew—was filled with bones and curious treasures. Necklaces of stone beads or chalcedony of marvellous workmanship, rattles and drops of gold, urns full of strange implements, painted vases and bowls, carven metlatés, solid gold plates, and cart-loads of bones filled the soil underneath that lonely meadow, and not a native ever dreamed of disturbing them. At long intervals some white man, with dollars, much energy, and many strange words, came and grubbed; and the results can be seen in the British Museum.

'Now, Gassy,' said I, 'this is just the spot for a gruesome tale. 'Go ahead!' Which he straightway proceeded to do.

'You remember how Billy Walker came down here ——'

'Do you mean Captain William Walker, the famous filibuster, who brought a gang of ruffians and cut the poor Indians' throats, and ——'

'Bosh!' cried Gassy, glaring at me savagely. 'I mean Captain William Walker, who came to regenerate this infernally managed part of Central America—who we always called 'Billy.''

'Did you know him?' I asked.

'Well, rather! Why I was his—— but that don't matter a Continental big D. I knew lots of his chaps, and one, named Scot, was my particular chum. He was a splendid young chap brave as a bull-dog and handsome as paint. He was among the fifty-five that fought that bloody battle at Rivas, and got badly wounded. At La Vergen he was so cut about by those

damned machetes that he got sent here to Ometepe to recruit ; for we—Walker, I mean—had the head hospital established on this island. The women here weren't so blooming ugly then, or at all events our chaps didn't think them so, and the Indian girls chummed with our chaps ; and the end of it was that the Indian bucks went mad, got a big crowd together, and attacked the hospital.'

'Where was the hospital, Gassy?'

'Close by. I'll show it to you to-morrow. Well, there was a blazing hot fight, but most of the poor chaps were patients, sick and nigh helpless, and the hospital was carried. But there was bloody work and fierce fighting while it lasted, before those yelling bucks got inside, and the cutting and stabbing was something devilish after they *were* in. It was a crush and press of fiends, hacking, hewing, and thrusting, with murderous clamour and bloodthirsty glee, clashing of weapons, furious yelling, and frightful screaming. The dozen or so of our chaps who were left able to stand, got together at one end and defended themselves against a howling mob—about a dozen infernal Indians on to each white man. A gang of brutes, with a hellish delight of carnage, went round to all the beds and cut the throats of the poor helpless chaps lying in them. It was awful! But the Indians had it hot ; they lay dead in heaps, quite five times as many as all our chaps put together. The last man left standing was my chum, Scot, and the Indian women cried out to spare his life.'

'How on earth do you know so exactly what was said and done, if you weren't there yourself, Gassy?'

'The women told the whole story.'

'But what were the women doing there?'

'Will you let me finish my story, or won't you?' queried Gassy fiercely, with his steely eyes scowling at me.

'Go ahead!' I said, meekly.

'Well, the men round my poor chum lowered their bloody knives, and seemed to hesitate. Then Ramon Selva, a cursed peon, whom I'm delighted to say is now in hell, slipped behind the lad, swung up his blasted machete, and clove my poor chum's skull nearly in two. In giving his blow, Ramon's foot slipped on the bloody floor, and the brutal murderer's ankle was so badly sprained or broken that he couldn't get up. Not a soul offered to help him, and he crawled away ; and in the evening his wife and two brothers slung him in a hammock,

and, with half-a-dozen more hands, set off to carry him to the doctor at Pueblo Grande.'

'Was that far away?' I asked.

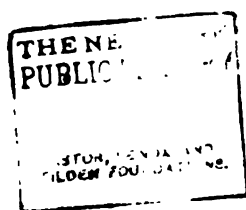
'Hang it, man! how can a place be far away on a small island that's mostly made up of a volcano mountain? Now let me finish off that sneaking murderer, the accursed Ramon Selva. It was evening, as I was saying when you interrupted me, but the sun was still up and the light was still strong upon that rocky slope we climbed up just now from the dell. Well, they went down that all right and began to cross the open, two men carrying Ramon in front and the rest following. Ramon was groaning loudly. Suddenly one of the women shrieked, and all turned to look at her. She was staring at that gap I showed you. Then they all stared at the gap. Just emerging from it was a jaguar, one of the largest. While they looked, with terror-straining eyes, the great beast drew himself clear and came stealthily towards them, with his head close to the ground, showing his teeth in a hideous grin. The women shrieked and ran hither and thither, wild with terror. Ramon groaned louder than ever, while the men drew their machetes and shook with fear. The jaguar now trotted quite boldly, taking no notice of either the women's shrieks or the men's yells. When he had got to within about fifty yards, the women bolted. Then Ramon's bearers dropped the hammock and followed the women, leaving the murderer on the ground; and the rest of the men followed the two bearers. Paying no attention to the fugitives, the jaguar made straight for the hammock, from out of which Ramon had now struggled, screaming for help. Noiseless as a spectre, the great brute crouched towards him. With a strong effort he managed to get upon his feet, and now stood in terror-stricken silence staring at the jaguar. His eyes were fixed, his wet hair bristled, his foam-streaked mouth mowed horribly. With a short roar the mighty beast sprang upon him at the very moment Ramon, twisting round, had turned his back. It was a case of swift retribution. Even as, ten hours before, he had cloven the skull of that poor boy from behind, so now did the jaguar, with one mighty paw-stroke, crush in the skull of the murderer. Then the jaguar seized him by the shoulder and trotted away with the body towards the lava fields, where the trail was lost. And no man ever saw trace of Ramon Selva since. So he went to hell, heaven be praised.'

The concluding sentences had been uttered by Gassy as



The mighty beast sprang upon him.





though talking to himself, and he now sat apparently buried in brooding thought. Around us was the solemn forest, overhead the spangled sky, with its crescent moon sinking towards the west. Here a moon-tipped leaf sparkled abruptly from out dark shadow, there a long pencil of silver quivered down through some tiny gap. Save the soft murmur of insects, there was no sound. Nicaragua looked like a lake of glass.

'Great snakes!' cried Gassy, with startling suddenness, 'don't you see how late it is? The moon's nearly down, and we shall be left in the dark. Come along, man! Let's clear out of this infernally dismal old graveyard and get back to the village.'

At the village we arrived in due course, and strolled in silence along its sandy street. Not a soul was abroad except a drunken priest who glared at us glassily, which was a sight too common in those parts to call for notice. Big dogs rushed out and barked at us noisily, and we arrived at our hut escorted by a mongrel pack. Then we retired to rest, and spent the night in unrestful warfare with foes too unfashionable to mention.

THE SPORT OF KINGS.

By F. M. CHAPMAN.

THE jockey, the horse, and the course, all in turn, come in for blame on account of a race being lost when, as is so often the case, it was the fault of none of these, whilst the owner and trainer exact sympathy and commiseration when really the reason of such loss, if properly traced, will be found owing to the happy-go-lucky methods and want of thought of the owner himself.

Let me exemplify my meaning in parable form.

Supposing a man gave you a sum of many items and told you to add up the pounds, shillings, and pence, all at the same time, you would know very well that it was impossible to do justice to more than one column at a time; but supposing this man said that he particularly wished you to attempt such a task, and told you that you would be paid accordingly; and suppose further that you had your livelihood to get by this means, and also knew well that even if you made mistakes,

however numerous, the man who set you the task was not himself capable of pointing them out to you, or of correcting them—would you not have a try at the sum? Why, yes, of course, you would; it would not matter one iota to you how many columns you tried to add up at once, so long as you got well paid, nor how many mistakes you made, so long as your employer did not know himself whether you were right or wrong, or could do it any better himself.

Or supposing you had fifty boys of your own, and you were foolish enough to send them all at the same time to the same tutor, should you be surprised if considerably more than two-thirds of them were hopelessly neglected; that their strong points (which lay dormant) were never discovered, and that only some four or five boys out of the whole lot, whose talents were easiest discovered, prospered, and did well?

Such is my parable, and its meaning will be evident to all, namely, that no trainer can do justice to forty, fifty, or more horses, as many are expected to do, and that if the owner really imagines he can, and the trainer endorses his opinion, then I submit that their imagination indeed runs riot with them. If the cleverest manipulator of figures can make a credit balance-sheet for the majority of 'winning' owners, from the published returns of stake winnings only for a credit asset, he is, indeed, an ornament to the profession he follows, for taking the returns of last year I find that 380 owners won less than 1000*l.* each—312 less than 500*l.*—279 less than 400*l.*—154 less than 200*l.*—whilst 86 owners each won only 100*l.* or less. Truly insignificant figures when you consider the number of horses they own, and realise the vast figures on the debit side, comprising training expenses, jockey and entrance fees, in addition to railway and other expenses amounting altogether to an enormous sum.

Now, naturally, it must strike all who look carefully into these matters, that something somewhere must be radically wrong, and I feel sure that ninety-nine per cent. of those studying the question will come to the conclusion that either there are a few thousand horses in training that are absolutely useless for racing, or that they are so badly trained, managed, and placed, as to be utterly incompetent of paying even their hay and corn bill, let alone other expenses connected with them.

But as it is no business of any one's as to how many horses a man likes to own, we are, I submit, entitled to consider the latter part only of such conclusion, namely, are these horses

properly managed, trained, and placed? Let us follow the matter a little further and see:—

Shall I be exaggerating, think you, if I say fifty per cent. of our race-horses are improperly or imperfectly broken and made? Well, probably, you will say I am; then let me ask you, do you read your papers? If so, don't you often find one or all of the following contretemps happening? The horse refused to leave the paddock—he could not be got to the starting post—he broke away with his jockey and jumped the rails—he whipped round at the start and was left at the post—he stuck his toes in the ground and refused to gallop—he tried to savage his jockey or another horse—he broke away and galloped the full course by himself, and when stopped could not be induced to rejoin his horses—the greatest difficulty was experienced in saddling and unsaddling him—and scores of other wrongdoings, not one of which would ever happen if the horse had been properly handled and broken. If, however, the generality of owners and trainers are satisfied with results, it is no business of the outside public, and if, as in many cases, savage, unmannerly, half-broken, half-trained, shin-sore horses are the sort to expect to win races with, they can scarcely wonder at the woeful appearance of their racing balance-sheets. If being boxed up daily, as horses are, in artificially heated stables for twenty-one or twenty-two hours at a stretch, littered on straw (a great quantity of which is eaten by many), endless galloping and but comparatively little slow work—being often run when only half fit—allowed to do pretty much as they like with incompetent stable-lads on their backs—entered for sprint races when distance was their forte, and *vice versa*—being backed by their owners when they run nearer last than first, and altogether neglected by them when they happen to get first past the post—being expected to get fit and so be kept for an indefinite time, ready to race whenever wanted: if such things are thought by owners to constitute a reasonable, sensible and business management, I must say I have failed altogether to understand the meaning of these words.

When shall we see an alteration of existing things? Not until owners see the impossible task they set their trainers, and become convinced of the following facts: That the hurried galloping preparation as at present given to horses, on account of the want of time and opportunity on the part of the trainer, is of no real use; that it should always be a treat and not a

nuisance to horses to race ; that there are plenty of ways of getting horses fit without that everlasting gallop, gallop, gallop ; that a horse must be prepared specially for a race ; that he has no business whatever to be raced to-day if he is particularly wanted for a race in two or three weeks' time, for you cannot keep horses in the acme of fitness—if he is as fit as he can be made to-day, he will not be as fit as he should be in two or three weeks' time ; and if he is not fit to-day his owner is more than foolish to allow him to be ridden out ; it is the extra exertion the horse is asked for in those last two or three hundred yards, when not thoroughly prepared, and which is so often attempted to be squeezed out of him under compulsion, that crabs and spoils so many horses ; you make a call upon nature which she cannot successfully grant ; nature does not allow the horse to finish as he should do, and he is in many cases wrongfully dubbed a rogue in consequence.

Is there any remedy for these things, or any brighter future for these numbers of owners who have won so little in stakes ? Certainly there is ; the matter is simple and easy enough if looked at and dealt with from a common-sense point of view. There is plenty of money to be made at racing, but things must not be managed in the hap-hazard way they are.

A man must not try to manage many horses—he cannot do it. He will win far more races with a few properly managed, thoroughly trained, and well-placed horses, than he can do with a lot which it is an absolute impossibility for him to understand and treat accordingly, since he cannot find the time.

There are scores of really good horses to-day to be bought at reasonable prices, horses that have run their weight off, that can win and would win if only given a proper chance.

Let such unsuccessful owners be satisfied, having won a race or two, to sell if a good price is offered and buy afresh. Directly a horse wins, up goes the weight ; winning with him again becomes much more difficult and uncertain, and as on account of his win he will probably fetch a considerable sum above the amount he cost, let him go, let some one else run him under his increased weight, and let him be replaced by one which can beat such cast-off and be pretty sure of starting at a good price.

Never under any circumstances should they keep a rank bad horse in the stable ; sell him at once for what he'll fetch, the first loss is always the cheapest. Get your horse fit without so

much galloping, it is easily done—let it be a treat instead of being irksome to the horse to gallop; never have him ridden out in a race unless he is as fit as hands can make him, and never run him big (literally); horses may and do win races when big, and you will find some sporting writers describe a particular horse as always running best when big: this is apt to give a wrong impression, for no horse in the world can in reality run so well big as he can when trained to the very hour of the race, and without having anything superfluous about him at all. The only reason horses do sometimes run better big, as it is wrongly called, is in reality simply because they are run 'fresher,' they have been eased somewhat in their gallops, they gallop 'newer,' and not so stale from being thus eased, hence the term big being applied and its being given as the reason for the horse's altered form. How many races if re-run would have a similar result? Few, if any. The best horse at the weights does not necessarily win; over training, want of condition, bad jockeyship, all are every-day elements of disaster which care and attention could obviate to a great extent. Such being the case then, let those in that terribly long list of unfortunate 'winning' owners take heart once more; let them run only good horses and fit horses, and then when the season of 1902 shall close, their balance-sheets will, I venture to prophesy, be far more pleasant to them to scan.

CURIOSITIES OF HUNTING.

By 'SNAFFLE,'

Author of 'The Roedeer,' &c.



PROBABLY few hunting men could reply off-hand to the question: 'What English county has no fox-hounds?' The answer is Lancashire. It is true that one pack of hounds take its name from a place in Lancashire—the Coniston, but it is kennelled in Westmorland; and it is a foot pack. Yet Lancashire is by no means unhunted; it has two packs of staghounds, Mr. Gerald's and Mr. Ormerod's—the former hunting wild deer, and the latter not, I believe, often using a deer-cart—and seven packs of harriers. I

think it is admittedly a curiosity that any English county should have nine packs of hounds and no foxhounds among them.

The answer to a similar question as to Wales is easier ; it is, Brecon and Anglesey. Again, both have harriers, so that to a certain extent both must be rideable, especially Anglesey, as the harriers hunt deer there one day a week.

As regards Scotland no such question would be asked, of course ; but the hunting area is curiously local—a cluster of packs between Firth of Clyde and Firth of Forth, another on the border, and one pack in Fife. Harriers, too, follow these lines ; but there is one detached pack, the Aberdeen.

Ireland, too, can afford hunting surprises. Ulster, nearly all Munster, Clare and Kerry in Connaught, are without foxhounds. Yet nine men out of ten would say all Ireland was hunted. No doubt many of the Irish packs of harriers have an open mind on the subject of a fox—one indeed returns themselves as draghounds, because they run a drag once a week. Another Irish 'harrier' pack owns to hunting 'fox only.' Then why call them harriers ?

Another thing which strikes the reflective mind when on the subject of hunting is this : Why are hunting countries so enormously crowded together in some counties rather than others ? I do not now speak of those affected by the metropolis. For instance, Devonshire, not a very large county, has no less than thirteen packs of foxhounds, besides three packs of staghounds and fifteen packs of harriers—thirty-one packs of hounds. Take as a contrast a straight line drawn from Swansea to Oswestry, eighty-five miles I suppose, absolutely unhunted ; or Norfolk, one pack of foxhounds, one of staghounds, and two of harriers.

Now for another hunting curiosity. People talk of grass countries—meaning Northampton, Leicester, Warwick and Rutland—and I suppose most people think that these countries really have an unusual proportion of grass to arable. Yet, strange to say, none of them have one half, which is about what Monmouthshire and Westmorland have. No county in either England or Wales really has more grass than plough ; and of the so-called 'grass countries,' Warwickshire comes nearest to this standard.

Now for some curiosities of subscription. Some packs name a minimum of subscription. This varies—one master says half-a-crown, another 40*l.* ! Some say so much a horse ; this, in the case of a lame 'un, would seem to be adding insult to injury.

Others say so much for each day one hunts. This seems more reasonable.

Foxhounds have records of more or less continuity ; but fox-hunting, as we all know, is a modern institution. With harriers it is different. The Penistone, for instance, not only claim to go back nearly *seven hundred years*, but can give the name of their Master in 1260, Sir Elias de Midhope. Mr. Netherton's record of five hundred years is given additional interest by the fact that during this period they have always remained in the hands of the same family.*

Beagles present fewer curiosities. An Irish pack is noted for the size of the hounds—twenty-three inches—and for the fact that they hunt deer after Christmas ! Of course, they really have nothing in common with an English beagle ; but a good deal, I should say, with the old St. Hubert hound. But as the name of beagle had been identified from Shakespeare's time, at least, with *little* hounds, it is curious that in Ireland a Kerry beagle should be a large hound.

Scent is popularly supposed to be the most curious thing connected with hunting. Mr. Jorrocks (can hardly keep him out of a hunting article, can we ?) said 'all that could be said about scent was that it was a werry queer thing. Nothing so queer as scent 'cept a woman.' In face of so great an authority I dare not say much on the subject, but the following may be new to my readers. A roebuck crossed a ride in view. The pack was laid on, and could make nothing of it. Half an hour later they happened to pass again, and ran hard on the same line at once. Now, where was the scent in the interval ? Another curious thing about scent is that no two people agree about it. I have expressed my opinion (in the chapter on 'Hunting in India,' in my *Gun, Rifle, and Hound*), that scent in that country improves with the rising sun ; and is worse after a shower. Since that book was published I have come across a magazine article by another Indian M.F.H., who holds a diametrically opposite opinion. Certainly his country was the best part of a thousand miles' journey from mine ; but, nevertheless, similar.

It is a curiosity, though only indirectly a hunting one, that in a sporting country like England so many people should know so little about hunting. 'How many have ye cotched ?' is a

* Since these lines were written Mr. Netherton has died, and his famous hounds have left Devonshire for ever.

common query attached to the homeward-bound Nimrod, but one that can only proceed from the mouth of one ignorant of hunting. As for the journalist and the novelist, hunting has indeed many pitfalls for him (or her), from the fox that was 'unearthed' in Rabbitborough Gorse to the 'tail' which is the 'spoil of the victor.' Few, however, have ever been guilty of such an extraordinary curiosity as the account of hunting in Mr. Caine's *Eternal City*. Roman hunting is, no doubt, a curiosity—a burlesque, if you will; but not quite what Mr. Caine would have us to believe.

It certainly is a curiosity to me that the newspapers should believe we hunting folk should have so little 'fixity of tenure.' No hunting accident ever occurs but the papers say that the victim was 'thrown from his (or her) horse,' and though, of course, this sometimes happens, every hunting man knows that in nine bad falls out of ten the mischief is due to the *horse* falling with and on its rider.

It is a curious thing connected with hunting that when there exists a proper, smart, convenient and sightly hunting dress, men who can well afford to hunt in pink should prefer any other costume. I see Lord Algernon Percy spoke his mind on the subject to the members of the North Warwickshire Hunt recently, and, as he well said, how are the farmers to know 'who's who' if they don't dress themselves properly? This is a growing evil, the only excuse for which that I can admit is that a tall hat is often a nuisance. But why not go back to the cap?

After all, the great curiosity about hunting is that it should exist at all on the present terms and in the twentieth century. I say this because, when you come to analyse it, it means that a man, merely because he is theoretically a subscriber to the up-keep of somebody else's hounds, considers that he is entitled to leave the road, open the gate of a field, leave it open for the stock to run out, jump the opposite fence, breaking a rail in the process, and, if he finds his further progress impeded by wire, write a furious letter to the papers d——g the landowner, the farmer, and perhaps the shooting tenant, whose cover, after a very wild, wet night, happened not to hold a fox. I don't say, mind, that he *should* do any of these things; nor do I mean that one individual does do them all in a day, nor yet that there are not such things as damage funds and wire committees. I mean that they are done, some or other of them, by those

who would never dream of doing any of them unless they were out hunting, and the fact that they are tolerated is a curiosity.

It is curious, too, that whatever happens is the fault of those who directly or indirectly live by the land, never of those connected with the hounds. Walking back from the little village where we 'sit in a 'ot shop with our 'ats on,' as Mr. Jorrocks defined the duties of a rural magistracy a year or two back, I met a fox, and did *not* head him. I knew the hounds were out, so stopped and listened—in vain. Half an hour later I met them, and was taunted with the want of a fox.

'Well,' I said, 'I can't say how many you have drawn over, but I can swear to *one* in Blank Wood, for I met him coming away after you had left it.' But for that meeting, who would have had the credit of the want of a run?

I find I am getting into a didactic vein, so I will stop. What I have said will, I dare say, do more good than harm, even if it only induces one or two of our young bloods to remember that hunting only exists by sufferance—sufferance to a certain extent dependent on their consideration, and that it should exist at all is the greatest hunting curiosity.

THE DUEL OF TO-DAY.

By HAROLD MACFARLANE.



FEW days ago a French candidate for political honours, failing to appreciate the prominence that a journal, whose politics were opposed to those he professed, gave to him and his opinions, promptly forwarded to the proprietor of the publication a message to the effect that he had read the article, had found it insulting, and concluded his communication with the announcement that 'I apply to your face, by telegram, the pair of slaps which you deserve.' This excellent method of avenging an insult will doubtless meet with the approval of all lovers of peace. Apparently, however, the recipient of the telegraphic blow failed to enter into the spirit of the encounter, for in place of forwarding a cut of the sabre by postcard, or transmitting by wireless telegraphy a bullet-wound in the front, which would of course have elicited letter-cards from the seconds to the effect that honour had been

duly satisfied, whereupon the duellists could have dispatched embraces and shakes of the hand by parcel-post, he waited on the sender of the slaps with a stick, with the result that divers blows were delivered that were decidedly more painful than any number of postman's knocks.

The encounter with sticks, in all probability, will never become really popular in France on account of the danger that the duellists would incur, a danger that all witnesses of a novel duelling match, held in Paris, February, 1900, will fully appreciate. The conditions of the tournament referred to were simple. The opponents, two professors attached to a gymnasium in the Rue de Malte, were to be armed with fencing canes, each round was to last half an hour, every halt was to be deducted. There was, it is perhaps unnecessary to state, only one round; and, notwithstanding the example set by the two gentlemen who recently fought a duel in instalments, the participators in this encounter showed no burning desire to run it as a serial, and no announcement was forthcoming to the effect that it would 'be continued in our next.' Considering that both men were experts in the art of fencing, the most surprising feature of the encounter, which lasted forty-one minutes and nine seconds, halts included, and ended in victory falling to one performer with the cane by the large margin of 69 to 18 points, was the fact that the blows landing on the body were so numerous. As a matter of fact the pain occasioned by the blows administered may have made the duellists less inclined to finesse than would have been the case had they been armed with foils, for the report of the proceedings states that they attacked each other with great violence, which would account for the numerous wounds they inflicted, from which blood flowed freely.

So far as this country is concerned, the duel with sticks is practically the only form of encounter that enjoys any popularity, with of course the one exception of the battle with fists; and, but for occasional bouts with broad-swords in the public parks and, once in a way, a duel with pistols, it is the only method of forceful reprisal to which we resort. The late Mr. James Payn's story of the American duel, which told of how the unlucky man, who was called upon by lot to shoot himself, retired for that purpose, fired his pistol and then burst in upon his remorseful and waiting opponent in the next room, triumphantly exclaiming, 'Missed, by Heaven!'—did much to un-

popularise and ridicule that form of encounter; and, in like manner, since the history of the duel with pistols at Bristol, in 1897, became public property, no infuriated opponents of British birth have resorted to lethal weapons within the boundaries of their native land to settle their little disputes.

On the occasion of the duel which took place at Bristol between two actors, members of a travelling company, it was at first reported that one of the principals had been seriously wounded, and was indeed in a critical condition. Later advices, however, proved that the statement had been somewhat exaggerated, a fact no one was prepared to gainsay when it transpired that the pistols used were either 'property' weapons, or at the most were loaded with blank cartridges, and that one of the principals was fully cognisant of the mock character of the duel, which was even more harmless than the average Gallic encounter.

Heretofore, except in works of fiction, duels have been strictly confined to combats between man and man, and occasionally between woman and woman; but within the last few years in this respect woman has been granted her rights, and has been placed on an equality with man both in Germany and America. She is not likely, however, to exercise her privilege on many occasions, judging from the dire result of the duel with revolvers that took place on July 6th, 1899, at Arlington, Illinois, when the man and woman engaged—in every sense—were both badly wounded ere the fight was brought to a close. The Teutonic encounter, unlike the American example of the 'mixed' duel, got no further than the issue of the challenge. The challenger, it should be mentioned, was a young idiot of the genus male, who had been soundly horse-whipped by the wife of a shop-keeper. It appears that the challenger, a student, *au fait* doubtless with many customs, but a neophyte in manners, had considered himself affronted in the first place because payment had been demanded for a long-outstanding account, and, having made himself exceedingly disagreeable in the lady's shop, which he repeatedly refused to leave, the fair owner took the law, and at the same time a horse-whip, into her own hands, with a corollary that the student discovered to be most painful. Shortly after the encounter, the young man's seconds appeared at the establishment with a form of apology for the wielder of the whip to sign, but on that lady refusing to put pen to paper, the envoys insisted that there was

nothing left for their principal to do but to challenge his antagonist to a duel 'on the severest conditions.' That nothing further ever transpired in respect to this affair of little honour may, of course, have been due to the choice of the challenged falling on horse-whips for the weapons to be used in the encounter.

The history of duelling already includes an encounter in mid-air between a couple of aeronauts armed with rifles, with which they aimed, not at one another, but at each other's balloons; therefore the perfecting of M. Santos-Dumont's navigable air-ship will open up no new possibilities to inveterate duellists, who will have to fall back upon an automobile duel, which would be most interesting and redolent of the lists of ancient days if the principals will agree to charge each other with their lances at rest, and the submarine, which would provide an encounter worthy of being translated to the boards of Drury Lane. About five years ago two young duellists broke away from convention by engaging in what should have been deadly combat when mounted on bicycles. Riding their metal-some steeds, and each armed with a sword-bayonet, the combatants furiously wobbled at one another, collided, and fell to the ground. As one of the duellists fell on his own weapon, thereby more or less damaging himself, honour was declared satisfied, and a prompt adjournment made to the nearest chemist. The bicycle duel speedily went out of fashion.


Rather over a year ago a bull that broke loose at Crewe and ran amok in the vicinity of the station had a pretty encounter with a locomotive that partook both of the nature of the duel and the tug-of-war, insomuch as when lassoed by energetic railway-men it was hitched to a locomotive, and, much against its will, towed out of the precincts of the company's premises. Whether this combat suggested a duel between the drivers of two locomotives, each combatant using his charge as a weapon, it is impossible to say, but such contests are getting comparatively frequent, for, in addition to a duel with traction engines in Sussex some half-decade ago, last July saw the Iron Mountain Railway and the Wiggins Ferry Company of the United States engaged in a locomotive duel, which had as the cause of the quarrel a disputed right of way. The encounter ended—on the arrival of the police—in three heavy locomotives of the former company pushing back two locomotives of the latter, sent to dispute their passage, until two cars were wrecked, one loco-

motive was in a ditch, and the other hung on the brink of the river. In August, 1899, there was unfolded at Merthyr Police Court the story of how two engine-drivers on the same line of railway in the Cyfarthfa Steel Works fought for precedence until the engine of one of the combatants, having locked its buffers with those of the opposing locomotive, was at length pushed off the metals. This novelty in duels, in conjunction with the history told of the steam trawler that just a year ago fought a one-sided duel with a rival off the Icelandic coast, and, after making three attempts to ram, succeeded in nearly sinking her, causes the thoughtful observer to be somewhat apprehensive lest we should be taking the duel of to-day too seriously. This habit of turning the instruments of livelihood into weapons of offence is rapidly growing—only two years ago a duel with scythes was fought at Bellefontaine—and sooner or later some serious damage will be done. A case in point occurred quite recently, when two New York bill-posters, who had been covering each other's bills, agreed to settle the matter then and there with paste-brushes, each starting with a full bucket of paste. In five minutes the battle was a thing of the past, and the honours of the fight, together with the paste, were fairly evenly distributed over each of the combatants. By that time, however, the damage had been done, for several spectators had to be conveyed from off the field who had nearly died—of laughter.

A BET AND ONE BETTER.

By M. N. B.

'HERE'S a health to every sportsman, be he stableman or lord,
If his heart be true, I care not what his pocket may afford;
And may he ever pleasantly each gallant sport pursue.
If he takes his liquor fairly, and his fences fairly, too.'

 HIS toast of Lindsay Gordon, has always seemed particularly sportsmanlike and spirited, and applied most aptly—of all men I ever knew—to my friend Tom Randolph, of Virginia, for his heart is in the right place, and he rides straight at solid five-foot walls, or the most appalling of the cursed 'snake-fences,' for which his State is noted, and, with equal nerve, tosses off the stiffest of 'whiskey

straights,' or the longest of the dizzying iced 'mint-juleps,' that are as dangerous to the uninitiated, as the aforementioned fence.

I have never been particularly keen on hunting or drinking, but I wrote to Randolph, asking if good shooting could be had in Virginia. He replied, that 'he reckoned so, as there were plenty of rabbits,' and he asked me down to his place, saying he would do what he could for me, and adding that he owned 'a couple of the finest fox-terriers out, and an old setter that is the best retriever in the county.'

The dog displayed this valuable accomplishment on the first morning of my visit, by bringing to the breakfast-table my large and somewhat gaudy carpet-slipper, which he presented to Tom's pretty sister. But there his skill ended, for I presently discovered that, unless I raced for the bird as soon as I had winged it, this paragon always devoured it. Birds, it may be added, were scarce, so the loss of one more than decimated the bag.

As for rabbits, they were plentiful, and many a time took a line through my covey while I was yet out of range, followed by the yapping terriers—that, of course, flushed it—and by Tom striding, with his long legs, in a sort of lope, and emitting strange, unearthly yells. He told me I should shoot while the cotton-tail was running, but the terriers were usually so close as to render this dangerous.

It generally ended by the hare being, as the negroes say, 'treed in a stone wall,' when my friend, with a great show of virtue, would call his pets to heel, saying it would be a shame to destroy the farmer's fence (this being the customary, unlicensed method of obtaining the prey), and would get them 'down' on us.

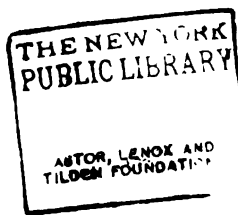
This seemed to me very poor amusement, but Tom informed me that it was only the run we wanted, and, if the terriers showed good noses, and a turn of speed, the mere accident of not having a kill, didn't matter. He said shooting, anyway, was a very second-rate kind of sport (and on the lines in which he indulged in it, I quite agreed with him), so when he suggested that we should take a day off, and go to the village to find what was going on in the horse-world, I gladly acquiesced.

Randolph received a hearty welcome from the knot of men who hung about the stove in the post-office. This room served as club and news depot, and, after a day of good sport, many were the tales here circulated, and fulsome the boasts of the prowess of man and horse.



"I'll bet you 25 Dollars
I get that brush!"
cried Tom

John Beer



Tom told of our tramps after birds, his narrative being interlarded with praise of the terrier's exploits ; but the wind was soon taken from his sails by the announcement that Billy Taylor, his rival in all things, had shot a wild turkey the previous day. This bird is rare in that section ; so Taylor flaunted his success with pride, untinged with needless modesty ; but Tom raised his eyebrows, scornfully remarking : ' You were out all day, and that was the best you could do—*one* wild turkey ? '

' Well,' retorted the nettled Nimrod ; ' it's better than you could do in a month. I'll bet you ten dollars on that.'

' Oh, no, my boy ! ' replied Tom, coolly ; ' I could shoot half-a-dozen in a day, but your paltry ten dollars are n't worth the trouble of going after them.'

Taylor's southern blood waxed warm at this, for he was hit in a vulnerable spot. Randolph was acknowledged the best man on a horse south of Mason and Dixon's line, but he was a very poor shot, while Taylor was past-master of the art—he never missed.

' If you can shoot half-a-dozen wild turkeys in a day, I'll give you ten dollars apiece for them, and let you keep their carcasses besides,' he exclaimed.

' Now that,' quoth Tom, ' is what I call generous, but I won't be outdone in this virtue. I will shoot you six wild turkeys before noon to-morrow ; but we'll divide their bronze bodies equally. If I fail to shoot that number, I will pay the forfeit of fifty dollars.'

I was amazed at my friend's audacity, for he could not hit a barn-door if the wind were blowing it, and I had not dreamed his self-confidence would carry him so far ; but, it seems, I under-estimated his ability.

He chuckled as we rode home, and several times slapped his knee delightedly.

' I am afraid you are in for fifty dollars,' I said. ' We haven't seen a wild turkey since I have been here.'

' We didn't go to the right place to look for them,' he answered oracularly.

Tom waked me soon after midnight, and by eleven o'clock we were at the post-office with six fine specimens of the wild turkey. I could vouch, too, that I had seen him shoot them, though I couldn't altogether approve of his methods.

After Randolph had pocketed the money, his cronies pressed him to tell how he had ' worked it ' ; at which he thrust his

hands in his breeches pockets, and, looking complacently around, said :—

‘Billy Taylor is a long ways better shot than I am, but it is brains that count in this world. Now, late last spring, I denned a fox over on Rattlesnake Mountain, and, on the way home, my hounds scared a wild turkey from her nest. There were a lot of eggs in it, but I didn’t bother them. A mile farther, I saw, at a cabin, the best-matched couple of hound pups I ever laid eyes on. I offered the woman a dollar and thirty-five cents (which was all I had with me) for them, but she wouldn’t take so little ; nor would she bring them to my place ; and, as it was too far for me to send for them, I thought they were not for me. Then I suddenly thought of the turkey’s nest, and offered a dozen eggs besides, saying if she raised the wild turkeys, I would buy a half-dozen at two dollars each. That proposition appealed to her, and I came home victorious with the pups—they are the best hounds in my pack.

‘I made that bet yesterday on the chance that the woman had been successful. We rode over there early this morning—it’s twenty miles—and I went in the building where the birds roosted, and, closing the door, did my work of execution. It took eight shots to bring down the six ; but then, as you see,’ he added, proudly, ‘they are nearly all shot in the head.’

His audience laughed delightedly, and Taylor joined them ; but he swore he would get even, and he did.

The following Saturday, Tom offered to mount me for a fox-hunt, and I gladly accepted, thinking it would be better sport than shooting, even though it was different from my preconceived notions of the game. Each man brought his own ‘dawgs’ to the meet, and there was neither Master or Whip. The most energetic sportsman, usually he with the largest following of hounds, would go into the woods with the heterogeneous pack, and with the yell peculiar to Virginians—a shout, not loud, but far-reaching—encourage them to their work.

Tom’s hunters can’t be beat for bone, muscle, speed, and staying qualities, and they are gentle and friendly in a way I have never noticed in those not Virginia bred. His favourite is a sixteen hands chestnut—clean bred, by Guardsman out of a Monticello mare—that can show his heels to the best over timber or across a stretch of sward.

Now, fox-hunting may be the king of sports, or the sport of

kings ; but hacking seven miles, at a walk, to the meet-in the grey and chilly dawn, followed by a coloured boy whipping in five couple of noisy hounds, is not a pastime that appeals to the imagination. And it was hardly more exhilarating to ride for hours over hills, so rough that you wouldn't believe me if I described them, with the result of drawing each covert blank.

The Virginians seemed perfectly satisfied with these conditions, and boasted ceaselessly, every man of his particular hound or hounds, and they knew the voice of each, and just what it was doing. 'That's Two Bars trackin' me,' as a continued and, to me, promising baying was heard, or it would be a rabbit, a cold trail, a dog—anything but the fox.

The field, though numbering hardly twelve, was a motley one, Billy Taylor being the only one, besides ourselves, in hunting things ; most of the men wore long overcoats, slouch hats, and leggings clamped at the side ; two were ragged negroes on raw-boned nags, that could jump no higher than their girths.

Randolph and Taylor larked over gullies, fallen trees, and fences in a way that made my blood run cold ; each was trying to 'hang up' the other, but they didn't succeed.

We were about fifteen miles from home, and, as a fine drizzle was falling, had decided to pull out, when the hounds set up a most infernal racket, in a little strip of woodland.

'That's the fox !' shouted Tom ; 'Hi-i-ish Rose ! hi-i-ish Driver ! This did not mean, literally, that he wished the hounds to hush, but, in that peculiar sporting vernacular, might be translated, 'Pack in.'

In another moment, the whole pack broke from the woods, and barely a yard in front, was a little yellowish-red streak—the fox.

I yelled, I couldn't help it ; something seemed to get into my blood, and my horse felt the same way. Can you imagine the most perfect piece of machinery suddenly turned into flesh and blood ? That's what he seemed. He stood stock still an instant, the thrill of exultation, of anticipation that passed through him, transmitting itself to me, then, with a mighty bound, leaped forward after that flying pack.

I have had some fairly exciting experiences in my life : I've been in a yacht race ; I killed a mountain lion ; and I heard, unexpectedly, of a fortune being left me ; but nothing, for delirious excitement, can approach that gallop, and I shall remember those twenty minutes as long as I live.

As I said, the pack broke from the woods right upon the fox; one hound made a grab for him as he jumped to a fence, and here he gained some twenty feet.—

‘Nor nearer might the hounds attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.’

I sent my horse at the wall; he rose like a rocket, and beyond I saw a sickening sight; the ground was literally covered with stones half as large as a man’s body. I set my teeth and prepared for death, but, instead, found myself sailing over a mountain pasture. How he landed among all those boulders without a stumble, I can’t understand, but the Virginia horses are as sure-footed as cats.

‘I’ll bet you twenty-five dollars, I get that brush!’ cried Tom to Taylor, as they galloped beside me.

‘Done!’ said Billy.

Down the mountain we rode at a canter, along a narrow cow-path, over fallen trees, across gullies, till finally a yell from Randolph, who was leading, brought us, with a sharp pull, to a standstill.

Atop a dilapidated brush-and-rail fence* stretched a rusted strand of wire, which, with two stones, Tom was violently pounding. I thought of his pious homilies on the subject of destroying farmers’ fences, for in thirty seconds the wire was parted; the brush dragged down; the rails thrown heedlessly aside; and we once more galloping down the mountain side.

This incident gave the pack a start, but we could hear their mellow cry ahead, and occasionally catch glimpses of waving sterns. Field after field of springy ‘blue grass’ we crossed; walls, post-and-rail and snake fences, we took without pause, and many a stream threw up its glint of sky, as we bounded to the bank beyond.

The pace was hot, but our horses were hard as nails, and eager as we for the chase.

‘We’ll catch him in the next mile,’ cried Taylor exultantly. ‘D—— that wire!’ for before us rose eight strands of woven metal, that no horse could leap or man break.

Hounds were a field ahead, bearing away to the right, but I stopped, checkmated. The wire stretched in an unbroken

* Bush fences are common in Virginia; young trees, limbs, &c., are piled and partly woven in an old, dilapidated fence, making a treacherous jump, particularly when there is a strand of wire top of all.

line across our way, in the level meadow ; on the right rose an almost perpendicular hill, topped by a trappy wall ; on the left a solid five-feet-ten of new rails stood stake and bound.

Tom never paused, but, facing short to the left, put his horse at the timber, and landed without a touch, safe on the other side.*

Taylor, at the same time, started up the hill. I saw his horse scramble to the top of the stone wall, and then spring down so far that he was lost to view.

As I was not looking for six-foot drops from shaky walls, or unbreakable rails—with certain death as the result of either experiment—I turned back, and, finding a gate, presently joined the reckless rivals who were standing dejected at the mouth of a den.

Several of the farmers were there before me, having come by a short cut, as they are well versed in wood-law, and knew where Reynard would run.

They immediately got to work with pick and spade, but it took four hours of continuous digging, before we saw the green eyeballs of our quarry. All this while the rain fell unceasingly.

One of the men pulled a wisp of hair from his horse's tail, which he braided and fastened in a loop into the notched end of a stick ; this he thrust into the den, and the fox seized it. It was then given a quick twist, and, his jaws thus firmly secured, it was then easy to drag him from his lair, and drop him in the bag that had previously served as saddle-cloth. At nightfall we turned our faces homeward.

A week later we had a 'turnout.' Every sportsman from three counties was there, and the Virginia farmer is generally a sportsman. The meet was in a little village of one street, but that thoroughfare was packed with horses and men of all classes and conditions, from the smart member of the near-by drag-hunt, on his clipped and docked thoroughbred, to the gaunt countryman in oilskins, astride a shaggy plough-horse.

The fox was given a fair start ; thirty couple of hounds were laid on his trail, and a field of nearly a hundred followed. A few miles of galloping, however, thinned this down to a small number, and when we had crossed some seven miles of country,

* This jump was actually taken in a hunt by Mr. John Stone, a member of the Warrenton (Va.) Hunt Club.

the first flight was composed of a half-dozen hard-riding sportsmen. Then Reynard went to ground.

'I would give five dollars for that brush,' I cried excitedly, as the little fellow was again bagged. Taylor glanced at me with a peculiar expression. 'Look here, Tom,' he said; 'I'd like to change that wager.' My mare is a bit winded, so I am not as sure of that little fellow's tail, but I will bet fifty dollars *you* don't get it.'

Tom took him up instantly with the proviso that we killed, and I was immensely flattered, for I felt that Taylor relied on my carrying off the coveted prize.

The man who held the bag was a local wit, noted as a dead shot, an amateur prize-fighter, a keen sportsman, and a practical joker. 'That's hardly a fair bet,' he drawled; 'your hoss is beat, anyway.'

'Well,' assented Taylor cheerfully, 'our friend here would give five dollars for that brush. Perhaps he will get it.' Here I thought I saw him wink, but I may have been mistaken. 'Anyway, the fox is about done, he won't run far; lots of things may happen.'

The farmer gazed at him, with a slowly dawning light on his face, and grinned.

Tom had been, during this colloquy, running his hand over the chestnut's legs; he now lighted a cigarette and, handing his box to Taylor, said, 'Take several, old man; you won't be able to afford them after I've got this brush.'

'You gentlemen wait here with the dawgs, and I'll let the fox go,' said the farmer; he walked across a field of broom-sedge, climbed a big wall and disappeared with the bag.

We each took a couple of hounds in charge (they had, as well as the field, thinned out), and though they tugged and gave vent to melancholy howls, we held them securely till the fox's liberator returned. I noticed he was wiping his knife, which was bloody, on his trousers leg.

We all mounted, hounds were taken beyond the wall, where they immediately found, and, with a long whimpering, went away with lowered heads; and we followed madly.

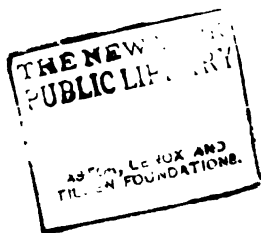
In spite of their predictions to the contrary, Taylor's mare still had a lot left in her, and pressed hard after Tom and me, while behind, like a locomotive, roared the farmer's stout gelding.

It was a beautiful bit of country we crossed, with clean fences,



With spur and whip
I rode for that brush

John Ruet



but, owing to a belt of woodland with thick undergrowth, hounds outstripped us, and were in a hungry heap tearing at the mangled prey, as we leaped the last fence. Then I laid on whip and spur and rode for that brush.

But 'blood will tell.' Tom passed me under a pull, and was down and kicking off the excited hounds, as I reached the place of the kill.

He was also swearing; not fitfully and in moderation, but long strings of oaths, with violent and startling emphasis. The pith of the matter, however, was that the hounds had *eaten* the brush.

There lay the torn carcase, with bits of fur strewn about the grass, one pad was torn off, an ear was missing; but why go into painful details?—the most thorough search failed to bring to view the missing brush.

'I reckon you'd better take back your cigarettes, old man,' said Taylor generously, when Tom had handed over the fifty dollars; 'you may not be able to afford them now,' and then he added complacently, 'I said I would get even, you know.'

Now, these two bets, though not exactly 'according to Hoyle,' were considered hugely funny by the friends of both Randolph and Taylor, and, as neither had gotten the best of the matter, they could afford, themselves, to laugh. And to tell the truth, I joined them heartily, but the following incident, while utterly lacking in humour, struck them as equally amusing.

The farmer—the one who had dropped the fox—came up as Tom was settling his bet, and giving a loud guffaw, slapped his thigh, exclaiming delightedly, 'You didn't get the *brush*, Mr. Randolph, on that crack thoroughbred o' yours?'

'No!' said Tom shortly, 'those d—— hounds of yours have eaten it.'

'Wal!' drawled the sporting tiller of the soil, 'I don't reckon so.' Then he turned to me. 'You said you'd give five dollars fo' that bush,' he continued, with his odious grin, 'that'll jes' 'bout keep me in tobacco all winter.' And here he drew from his pocket (I shall never forget that moment if I live to be a hundred) and handed to me *the brush*!

TOM, THE KEEPER.

By MAURICE NOEL.

THIS Tom was a type of the game-keeper race,
 And with Squire Bellew had an excellent place ;
 He could run, he could fight, and was handy all round,
 As the poachers he tackled had frequently found.

But, whatever his virtues, it could not be said
 That he made enough use of the brains in his head ;
 His good situation and snug little box
 He lost—through the hatred he bore to a fox !

Like many in gaiters and velveteens clad,
 The sight of a vixen and cubs drove him mad ;
 And it soon was apparent to Squire Bellew,
 Though pheasants were plenty, that foxes were few.

Now Squire Bellew, though so fond of his gun,
 Was fonder—by ever so much—of a run,
 And better, by far, loved a loud ‘Gone away !’
 Than a long row of birds at the end of a day.

So Tom to his study was called, and in vain
 Of the loss of his pheasants began to complain ;
 The peppery Squire exclaimed with an oath,
 ‘I always have had, and I mean to have—both !’

Tom was not sufficiently clever to see
 The folly of fighting ‘the powers that be ;’
 So, on leaving the study, he growled and he muttered,
 Forgetting which side of his bread had been buttered.

And presently, filled with resentment and ire,
 He sat on a stile, and he puffed at his briar,
 And grumbled aloud : ‘As if gentlefolk knew
 The troubles a keeper has got to go through !’

‘He breeds up a nice lot of birds, you may say ;
 He watches by night, and he feeds ’em by day,
 And, just as they gets to be ’ealthy and strong,
 A mischievous toad of a fox comes along !’

‘And then there’s the very old Harry to pay,
 For he kills many more than he carries away ;
 But what’s an unfortunet keeper to do
 If foxes, like birds, must be plentiful too ?’

'For, though he may watch 'em, and sit up at night,
And 'ardly 'ave time for a wink or a bite,
If he leaves 'em an hour his labour's in vain.
For the murdering devil is at 'em again !

'And, mind you, that isn't the worst of it, quite,
For, say that your pheasants *and* foxes is right,
Your very best cover you're going to beat,
And two days before it—by George !—there's a meet.

'You may think if a keeper is fond of the 'ounds,
When his birds are all scattered and driven "out bounds !"
For not in two days, nor a week—perhaps more—
Can he hope to give half such a show as before.'

Thus Tom sat and pondered, and looked very black,
And finally said, 'He may give me the sack,
But as to preserving them foxes—I won't !'
I'll turn 'em some bagmen out, d——d if I don't !'

At last, on a day when the hounds drew again,
Each copse and each covert they rattled in vain ;
There was only a bagman, and three-legged at that,
Who wouldn't go off when Tom 'lifted his hat.'

Soon afterwards, Tom, with a very long face,
Was looking about for a suitable place ;
And never forgot, for the rest of his days,
That 'the tune may be called by the party who pays !'

ENGLISH SPORTS AND PASTIMES IN POTTERY.

By WILLIAM NORMAN BROWN.

THERE has been for some time past on loan at the Bethnal Green Branch of the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington a very fine selection of ceramic ware illustrating popular British sports and pastimes, history, drama, agriculture, warfare, &c., lent by Mr. Henry Willett, of Brighton, in the Museum of which well-known resort the collection was for many years on exhibition. Having paid many visits to the collection in both its show-places, we purpose in the following lines giving some particulars thereof, bestowing pride of place to the section dealing with

our national sports and pastimes, remarking that many of the objects referred to are just now to be seen in duplicate at the Alexandra Palace, where there is also a small, but very well shown, collection of specimens of the potter's art.

Thus, taking first the truly British pastime of boxing, though in the days to which this pottery refers the modern-day effeminate gloves were almost unknown, we find that the heroes of the Prize Ring were very largely honoured in ceramics, for a large proportion consists of records of celebrated battles. One of the best specimens consists of a fine bust, fifteen inches high, of Ben Caunt. Round the base is the champion's belt, stated to have been presented to him at Jem Burns's, May, 1841; and, in addition, there are these following particulars: 'Champion of England, born at Hucknall Torkard, Nottinghamshire, March 22nd, 1815; height, 6 ft. 2½ in.; weight, 15 st. 4 lb.;' while on either side of this inscription is a list of his battles. At the back the bust is stated to have been made 'by H. Bentley, modelled from life, 1844.' It is generally considered to be a good portrait. A very elaborately printed jug represents Spring and Langan engaged in a well-remembered Sussex fight, over the picture being, 'Drink to England's champion, Gallant Spring;' and underneath, 'June 8th (1842) at Chichester, in Sussex. 77 Rounds.' On another jug is to be read, 'Humphreys and Mendoza (a Jew) fighting at Odiham, in Hampshire, on Wednesday, January 9th, 1788.' Over each figure in the picture is a numeral, corresponding with a list of names written underneath. Other heroes of the Prize Ring are similarly honoured, among them being the redoubtable Tom Sayers, Tom Cribb, Heenan, Molyneux, the negro professional, and 'Johnson and Perrin at Banbury' (fought October 22nd, 1789). Leaving the Prize Ring, there is represented on a cup another pugilistic encounter between a man and a woman, which is entitled, 'Peggy Plumper Proving her Man before Marriage. Who wears ye Breeches.' The cup is decorated with a dozen lines of very amusing doggerel, which explains the reason and result of the contest. There are also some plaques and statuettes dealing with the same pastime.

We come now to the aforetime sport of bull-baiting, which is well illustrated by a series of cups of ferocious bulldogs' heads succeeded by some half-dozen grouped pieces showing bull-baiting in full progress. Strutt tells us that this national barbarism was well in vogue as early as the time of Henry II.,

and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was a favourite pastime on Sunday afternoons, and its memory is still kept green in those towns which possess a bull-ring, such as Birmingham, for instance. In some of the pieces of pottery ware the bull is shown with a dog hanging on to his nose, in others he is shown as having successfully tossed the dog.

Allied to this, though not so common, was bear-baiting, and several bear jugs are to be seen, the jugs being moulded in the shape of a bear, generally hugging a dog, which forms the spout. Most of the representations represent Bruin as a dancing bear, accompanied by the showman and his dog, as though indicating that bears travelling through the country were engaged for the sport. One coloured group shows the performing bear in charge of two showmen, with a dog, on which a child is riding, holding in his mouth the hat for contributions.

Another, and an essentially national, sport represented is cock-fighting, which prevailed in this country until quite recent times, and is even now not quite unknown. There are several pieces of pottery devoted to the sport, one of the best specimens being a colour-printed mug bearing the words 'Cock-Pit.' In the accompanying picture on a table are seen a couple of cocks fighting, surrounded by a crowd of spectators, one of whom exclaims :—

'Come, fifty guineas I will lay
That Ginger beats your bonny Gray.'

On another jug the scene is copied from Hogarth's print of the Cock-pit. A large two-handled mug in yellow and white bears this inscription :—

'May the best Cock win.

H. COBDEN,

1847.

Anglesea Arms Inn.'

This Mr. Cobden was the last trainer of fighting cocks to the Duke of Richmond, and on leaving the ducal service took a public-house at Halnaker, near Goodwood, called the 'Anglesea Arms,' when the above cup was presented to him by his admirers. On a beautifully painted and goodly-sized cup the battle is represented in half-a-dozen tableaux, thus: (1) 'A Challenge,' the two birds looking defiantly at each other; (2) 'A Set-to,' the fight having begun; (3) 'A Heeling,' one has struck his claws into the other's breast, and is digging into his head; (4) 'A Rally,' the combatants pausing for breath; (5) 'A

Knock-down Blow,' one having got decidedly the worst of it ; and (6) 'The Death,' in which the vanquished lies dead and the victor triumphs.

Strange as it may appear, the sport of kings is but poorly represented, only some half-dozen groups illustrating horse-racing. The colour of some of the steeds is more remarkable than truthful, one animal having a buff-coloured coat dashed with pink and green hoofs, while the singularity of its complexion is increased by a bright blue saddle-cloth. Altogether, this section is more crude than artistic. A small cup has a representation thereon of a donkey race.

Coaching comes in for a fair measure of recognition, and some of the more famous of the old mail coaches, with names now almost as completely forgotten as the horses that drew them, are pictured here. On one large jug is the coloured print of a coach and four, over which is written :—

‘These are Sorts
for Going.’

A coach running, according to the inscription on it, between ‘London, Bristol, Cardiff, and Swansea,’ is called ‘The Prince of Wales,’ and over it is the name, ‘Jacob Goodwin, 1810.’ A third jug, richly ornamented with flowers, represents ‘The Royal Pilot,’ which plied between ‘Leicester, Liverpool, Kendall, Carlisle, London.’ Over it is the name, ‘Thomas Williams.’

Cricket is illustrated by a large cup bearing a coloured representation of the famous match played at Lord’s on June 10th and following days, 1790, between Lord Winchilsea and Lord Darnley’s elevens, for a stake of 500 guineas a side. In the picture the players are shown using curved clubs, and the wicket has only two stumps.

One of the exhibits will have a particular interest for cyclists, this being a small plate with a print of a gentleman of the later Georgian time on a species of bicycle or hobby-horse, having one foot on the front wheel and the other on the back one, and steering with a long recurved handle. Above are these two lines :—

‘I scud along on this machine,
While many a crowd is gaping seen.’

And below these :—

‘Accelerating power,
Gaining ten miles an hour.’

Turning now to field sports, these are well-nigh represented in every form—stag and fox hunting, coursing, angling, and pheasant, partridge, and wild-duck shooting. As was only to be expected, the humorous side of sporting occurs more frequently to the mind of the potter than the legitimate, and, among others, the Cockney Sportsman comes in for illustration, as will be seen in a large jug with a coloured print bearing this title. He has already bagged a cat and other domestic animals, and he is about to have a bang at a swarm of bees, exclaiming: ‘Damme, I’ll have a blow at them; better small Birds than none!’ This jug also has masonic emblems with ‘Memento mori,’ and the King, George IV., riding to Carlton House on a velocipede. Another jug has a picture of the ‘Taylor turned Sportsman,’ in which the bag is shown as comprising an owl, a cat, and a goose, with these lines below:—

‘There once was a Taylor a shooting wou’d go,
Who before had ne’er fired a gun we well know:
The piece double charg’d hit him full in the breast,
And gave him the attitude here as expressed;
The gun left his hand and the birds flew away,
And the Taylor’s been sick of the sport to this day.’

A highly ornamental jug of Leeds ware shows a sportsman with his dog and gun, and underneath the picture these lines:—

‘To no other Place of diversion I’ll run,
For, ther’s non can excell a dog and a gun.

GEORGE RICHARDSON, 1771.’

The figure in this picture wears a bright green coat, and the dog has just flushed two birds of bright crimson with black scapulars. A very fine and an extremely rare old Worcester mug illustrates Bewick’s design of wild-duck shooting. Several cups here of the heads of dogs and foxes and of fish are well worthy of inspection.

Tiger-shooting, Punch and Judy, and marionette shows are also illustrated, but these can hardly be included within the purview of this article; but those who take an interest in the sports and pastimes of the past might do worse than pay a visit to the Alexandra Palace as well as the Bethnal Green Museum.

OVER A THAMES WEIR.

By 'STRAW HAT.'

IT is now many seasons since the events described in this paper took place, but they are as fresh in my memory as though they had happened but yesterday.

For several years (by the way, I was a young and ardent member of the force which is usually described as the 'detective') I had done duty down the lower reaches of our metropolitan river, but nothing had occurred to lift me out of the ordinary routine, consequent upon the series of every-day crimes that were committed among the various vessels that congregated in the Pool, below London Bridge.

My constant visits, however, to those gentlemen who were distinguished among our fraternity as light-horsemen, heavy-river-pirates, and mudlarkers (not omitting watermen), had made me so familiar with the river, both above and below, that I was not surprised when I was selected to work out a case of burglary that had occurred on the banks of the Thames, in that stretch of water which reaches from Molesey to Sunbury.

The scene of the robbery was just outside the town last named, and between the Thames and railway, where several houses, standing in their own grounds, had been lately erected.

The usual precautions against capture had been adopted by the burglars. There was the ever-ready ladder, by means of which access had been gained to the upper rooms, the wires across the lawn, the wedges for effectually closing the bedroom-doors, and the ever accompanying dinner-party. The robbers, of whom there were two, successfully carried off their booty, which consisted of numerous articles of jewellery, gold chains, earrings, gold pins, rings, cash, and watches, to the value of 1500*l*. The mechanism of the force was soon set in motion, and patrols were scouring the country in the neighbourhood the same evening, but all to no purpose; the thieves had either got clear away or were in hiding in some spot near the scene of action. I knew that the mounted men would not relax their efforts in endeavouring to secure the culprits, and I also had an idea that the perpetrators of the robbery would most likely 'lay low' for a few days, in order to get clear by cart or river with the booty. Attired as a lighterman, therefore, I hung for some

hours in the vicinity of Molesey Lock, and then worked my way up the Middlesex shore towards Sunbury, with occasional offshoots towards the railway. I had left Hampton behind me, where I had chartered a punt in order to explore Platt's Eyot, but I drew a decided blank, for nothing turned up in any way to elucidate the mystery.

On the morning, however, of the second day after the burglary I turned off, after leaving the 'Ait,' to where the river winds rather inland, and took stock of the surroundings. About a quarter of a mile ahead of me a boy, of perhaps fifteen years of age, was poking about in a hedge and whistling. I immediately ran to cover; but I was too late, for he had evidently seen me. I saw by his movements that he intended to pay me a visit, so I sat down, drew out my paper of bread and cheese, and made up my mind for the inevitable interview.

'Where did you learn to whistle, boy?' I asked, when he came within hail.

'Oh, I dunno!' he replied. 'I suppose you thought I didn't see you, as you bobbed out of the way so quick?'

'No,' I retorted; 'I felt hungry, and thought I would like a bit of grub. Have a bit?'

'Right you are!' he replied. 'I've had nothing yet.'

Not being anxious to begin the conversation, I ate in silence, for I thought that if there was anything to come out, it must come from my juvenile friend.

After a minute or so, and looking at me rather knowingly, he remarked, in an undertone, 'I say, are you one of that lot?' at the same time pointing over his right shoulder with his thumb.

Taken rather by surprise, but not wishing to appear so, I cut into a big hunk of bread, and said, 'What lot?'

'Oh, you needn't be so innocent!' was his answer. 'I mean that lot in the old cottage on the hill-side there. They threatened to hide me well if I got hanging about their house, and I was only looking for a few mushrooms.'

'No,' I answered; 'I'm on the look-out for a job to work a barge down-stream. I'm a waterman. Which old cottage do you mean?'

He moved out to show me, and, looking over his shoulder, I descried an apparently dilapidated building, that looked as if it had formerly been tenanted by a keeper or agent. Inured as I was against surprises, I felt a tremor pass through my body on

the receipt of this news, but I replied carelessly, 'Well, I shall walk down to the lock again ; something may come down. And if you're going to Molesey, you may as well come too.'

On the road down I pumped the lad pretty well, and got out of him that he heard one of the men say to another something about a monkey-barge. This was quite enough for me, so in the evening I determined to reconnoitre the old cottage, and to discover what I could in relation to the squatters, for so I judged them to be. At the 'Castle' one of our men was waiting for me. Him, with the help of Old Milbourne, I rigged out as a Thames angler, and gave him instructions to fish west of Platt's Island, and to take stock of all barges, anchored and drifting.

I passed through Hampton about seven o'clock the same evening, and reached the Eyot in time to see my pal land a very decent roach. The shades now began to fall, and in half an hour it was nearly dark. I had to hunt for the cottage, but after a long cast, I found it, although in reaching the outside fence I had walked into a water-course that took me up to the thighs. I soon scrambled out, however. The water was not deep—only just high enough to run into my boots, but I was out again so quickly that not much entered my water-tights. There was no light in the front of the house, so I scaled the fence and worked round to the back, where I discovered a set of out-houses jutting into the yard. A dim light, as though from a candle, shone through the lower room window, guiding me to a kind of recess, at the end of which was a square window, opening with a catch, and swinging back on hinges. This window, when fastened back, reflected, as a mirror would, all that took place in front of it, and, as it was just on the level of the back room, I was able to discern what was going on inside. Two men sat at a kind of bench, playing cards, while a third leant upon his elbows, watching them. Further on the bench were two leather bags, such as are used to carry samples in, while a revolver reposed between the two.

I watched for perhaps half an hour, when the cards were put aside. The bags were then handed forward, and opened ; then I plainly saw that I had successfully tracked down my quarry. There were watches, diamond brooches, rings, crosses, and many other articles of sterling value ; and the men had no doubt remained where they were in hiding, in order to baffle pursuit, and to escape eventually with the proceeds of the robbery. Their window was opened at the top sash, and some parts of

their conversation I could distinctly hear, which was to the effect that 'the barge would be down by about 5 a.m. next day, and that "Bill"—whoever he might be—'was to have the charge of it. It would have a dinghey at the stern, with a boy in it, to be sent ashore on the signal being given.'

I thought that it would be useless to attack them there, they being three to one, and armed ; so I crept cautiously out from my coign of observation. Making tracks for the spot where I had moored the punt on the preceding day, I found it just as I had left it, and pushed off into the slack water at the back of the island.

Off Hampton I was going along merrily. The moon was up ; Hampton was all alive ; while beyond, I could hear the dull roaring of the weir, and the tumbling bay, at the last island. The stream was going at a rare pace, for the recent rains had filled the river to the brim, and the paddles were up to let the water off.

Just as I reached the end of the Walnut-tree Island, I shot out, intending to cross the weir-stream about thirty yards in front of the 'danger-board.' I kept hard at it ; but just as I reached the centre of the stream, the punt-pole struck into the deep mud, and, at the pace I was going, I failed to hold it. There was no mistaking my position now. The south-west wind was blowing a six-knot breeze ; the punt stopped, swerving with the force of the rush of water and the wind, to the left of the danger-board. The deep roar of the tumbling bay now came with increasing force as my frail bark rushed impetuously towards it. I tore up a plank from the bottom of the punt, and worked desperately again for the mid-stream, as I knew the weir well, for old Milbourne and I had often fished from it for Thames trout. At last I was in the centre, and end-on for the weir-apron in the middle of the fall. Fortunately, there was no boom across, for the head of water coming down-stream, after the rains, had caused its removal.

Onward I went, now at racing pace, until I could see the tops of the breakers below, rising twelve feet or fourteen feet from the rushing backwater. The dark-green water ran over the brow of the weir in an unbroken line ; but I kept the punt straight for the centre, as though for the archway of a bridge, knowing that the deepest water ran there, although the whole brow was underneath. The roar of the weir was simply awful as the heaving breakers hove fully into sight. Now was the time. I pitched

the thin plank into the bottom of the punt, and threw myself flat upon my back at the end, shutting out all view. I seemed to be going at railway pace as the punt dipped for the fall.

There was a crash as she struck the breakers underneath, and thousands of white, struggling demons seemed to be fighting to grasp me as I shot by them into the weir-stream, *in safety*. I held on like grim death to the punt-sides for a brief period, when I arose from my position. I seized my plank, and straightened my craft, as she was rushing with frightful velocity towards an immense log that jutted out into the stream. She struck, but righted, and still onward she tore, but at a slightly moderated pace, rounded the turn, and rushed past the weir proper.

In five minutes more I had landed at the 'Castle,' unhurt, with the loss only of the steel-pointed rye-peck. I had, however, shipped a considerable amount of water in the passage; indeed, the craft was all awash with it; but beyond this I had negotiated the weir in safety; but only through bearing in mind the advice of my mentor, Milbourne, who often, in my younger days, offered to 'take me over when there was water enough.'

My man was in the 'Castle,' but only to him did I recount my doings of the last three hours. We retired to bed at once, he to rest, and I to lie awake till the small hours. At 5 a.m., one of the local men in plain clothes cycled to the lock, to inform us that a barge had come through Sunbury Lock; that just below the wooden bridge, a dinghey had gone ashore, and had taken on board three men from the Middlesex side, two of them carrying hand-bags. In ten minutes our prey rounded the 'Hurst,' towed by the usual horse. Five minutes more and she was inside the gates. Two men, who had been fishing at the lock, put down their rods and jumped on the barge at one end; my man and I did the same at the other extremity, while the cyclist left his machine and joined us. Only the man at the tiller was in sight; but down in the cuddy we found the three men, and the boy who took them on board in the dinghey. They made no resistance, but at once delivered up their arms and the two bags. We took the entire crew and the stolen property, the whole of which latter was intact. The four men 'did time,' but the boy was discharged; while I, with the small force under my command, received considerable kudos for the manner in which we had panned out the catch.

I have shot several of the up-river weirs since, but I have

always done so under 'the educated eye and 'practised hand of a Thames fisherman. My wife and I live up-stream now, and occasionally she points to two little grey patches near my temples, and twits me with the refrain :

That it grew white
In a single night,
Shooting the weir at Hampton.

THE CONQUEROR.

By FOX RUSSELL,

Author of *Outrigger*, *Colonel Botcherby*, &c., &c.

LORD LANGSTON, of Wildwood, was the *beau-ideal* of a country gentleman, and, being a bachelor, the honours of the house were done by his niece, Lady Angela Curtis, a beautiful young widow, who rode, hunted, and fished. With glorious health, and practically unlimited means, she enjoyed her existence to the uttermost. Small wonder that she was in no hurry to again surrender heart and liberty in the uncertainties of a second marriage.

And yet John Thorndyke had hopes. He had secretly loved this girl, even before her marriage ; had remained faithful to his ideal throughout her brief widowhood ; and—not being the typical hero of romance, but merely a man of flesh and blood—had thanked God when he heard that she was once more free to marry him—if she would.

For several years he had 'knocked about the world,' had known rough times, faced danger and starvation more than once, and had handled a rifle in fierce frontier warfare. John Thorndyke was a strong, resolute man, brave as a lion, and yet—as brave men should be—tender as a woman.

It was late afternoon, when a string of vehicles was driven swiftly up the old oak avenue of Wildwood, bringing a party of guests from the station, and swinging round the drive, a cheerful blaze of firelight caught the eyes of the travellers through the open door. Once within the square, wainscotted hall, chilled limbs were quickly forgotten. Furs were slipped off shapely shoulders, overcoats carried away, and tea quickly circulated

amongst the party. As Lady Angela handed a cup to Thorn-dyke, their eyes met for a brief moment, and he was satisfied, and content to temporarily efface himself and chat to old Sir Hildebrand Ogleton, K.C.B., a warrior of renown in his own, if not in any one else's, estimation.

'Glad to see you looking so well, Sir Hildebrand,' said Thorndyke, cheerfully.

'I *am* well, my dear fellow,' replied the veteran young man—for nothing would have induced the great K.C.B. to confess to more than forty-nine. The Army List told another tale, but Sir Hildebrand conveniently ignored the Army List.

'I hear you're to ride for Lady Angela in the Grand Annual Steeplechase, to-morrow. Is that so?' asked the General.

Thorndyke nodded pleasantly. He had felt a greater pride, when he had been asked to ride by Lady Angela, than he was willing to confess.

'Good horse?' jerked out the warrior.

'Yes, very. You may have heard of him. A horse called the Conqueror.'

'Yes, I know him well. Saw him win at Sandown. I am a great lover of steeplechasing.' And then he hastened to add, 'I don't ride in steeplechases myself.'

Thorndyke looked at the rotund figure, carefully 'stayed in,' and then at the dyed moustache.

'No, Sir Hildebrand, I suppose not,' he said drily.

'Our little friend, Lady Angela, doesn't seem in a hurry for a second husband, eh?' quoth the warrior. 'Now, do you think—that if—er—a man of—er—position, such as—as—as—'

'Such as yourself, Sir Hildebrand?' gently suggested Thorndyke, repressing a horrible desire to laugh aloud.

The warrior shook one leg and clasped his hands behind his back.

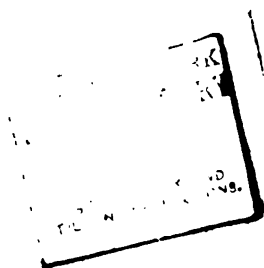
'Well, my dear feller, I don't really know. I might and I might not feel inclined to marry, some day. No hurry, of course, for that. I've plenty of time. But do you think that if I gave her the chance—I mean to say, if a man of position were to make her an offer, do you think she would—h'm—er—eh?'

'Really, Sir Hildebrand, I could not say. Why don't you ask her?'

'Ah, ah—yes—well—we'll see, we'll see.' And the old gentleman strutted off to the further side of the hall.



wringing & rolling
over each other



One by one, the guests moved slowly away, and up the great oaken staircase, to dress for dinner. Angela Curtis and John Thorndyke found themselves alone.

‘I hope the Conqueror is well, Lady Angela?’ he said.

‘The dear old horse is so well, just now, that you really must win on him to-morrow. You don’t know what fortunes—oh! hundreds!—I have risked on the race. But you will win, won’t you, Mr. Thorndyke? You must!’

‘Now you are trying to make me nervous, Lady Angela,’ he laughed.

‘Mr. Stracy says that the horse is sure to win—if he is properly ridden. And you know he is very experienced as a race-rider himself.’

Lady Angela, woman-like, wished to make Thorndyke jealous. He, man-like, entirely missed her object, and thought she meant to disparage his horsemanship. This was more than even he could tamely submit to. For, be it said, with bated breath, that you may brand a man as an assassin, and still live; but you may *not* cast any doubt upon his skill in the saddle!

Thorndyke perceptibly stiffened in tone as he replied:

‘Of course, Lady Angela, if you mean that I am *not* sufficiently experienced to be entrusted with the handling of your horse in the Grand Annual, I will gladly resign the mount.

‘Tiresome and stupid, as all men are!’ thought the pretty widow to herself. ‘Bother his riding prowess! what *do* I care about that?’ But she only said:

‘Don’t be so silly, Mr. Thorndyke; do we not all know you as the “hero of a hundred fights” across country? Alan Stracy, though, *is* an excellent judge, isn’t he? Don’t you think he would make an admirable adviser in matters connected with my steeplechase horses?’

Lady Angela was an adept at playing a fly over an unresponsive fish.

Now Thorndyke happened to know a good deal of Mr. Alan Stracy, and his devious ways. That gentleman’s reputation on the Turf was, to put it in the mildest form, ‘smart.’ Stracy was capable and clever; but as an adviser to the woman he loved—? John Thorndyke’s mouth hardened ominously, as he answered:

‘No, Lady Angela, I do *not*.’

‘Ah,’ thought the girl, a gleam of triumph in her eyes, ‘he is beginning to feel jealous!’

‘Oh, Mr. Thorndyke, are you two rivals—for cross-country honours?’

But the hardly perceptible pause made after the word ‘rivals,’ conveyed a subtle suggestion which roused John Thorndyke, and set the blood dancing through his veins. He rose to his feet with a stern look on his face, which was quite new to her. She thought she had never admired him so much as at that moment.

‘Lady Angela, I would rather not discuss this with you; but you and I have known each other for many years, and I ask you not to mix yourself up with Alan Stracy.’

At these words, Lady Angela experienced a sudden storm of emotions. All her old imperiousness came to her aid as she also rose from her seat and faced him.

‘Mr. Thorndyke, my own uncle would not have ventured to say so much to me!’

‘That is your misfortune, then, Lady Angela.’

This was a new experience. All her other admirers had but breathed agreeable words. This man told her—the truth. She stamped her small foot angrily—and her slipper came off. This trivial incident, would, under ordinary circumstances, have been sufficiently absurd to have turned the stream of her wrath—for, beneath the commanding manner, she was thoroughly good-tempered, and possessed of more than a woman’s average sense of humour. But she loved the man, and therefore took the trouble to be angry with him.

Flushed, and yet with the love-light in her eyes, could he but have seen it, Lady Angela thrust her foot into the peccant slipper, and said, ‘After this, Mr. Thorndyke, I would rather my horse were ridden by Alan Stracy in to-morrow’s race. I hope you don’t mind?’

The last words were uttered in a tone of indifference; but there was a challenge in them which, unfortunately, his mind was too completely masculine to comprehend. Bitterly disappointed in her, he merely bowed and left the hall.

It might have been some consolation to him as he dressed for dinner that night, had he known that, on reaching her room, Lady Angela had dismissed her maid, and then flung herself upon the sofa, weeping.

And that evening she was ‘nursing her wrath to keep it warm,’ and trying to feel a great resentment against Thorndyke, for daring to ‘lecture’ her, as she called it.

Alan Stracy accepted the mount with avidity. The Conqueror was a well-known 'public' horse, and would certainly be a strong favourite. And the excellent Alan thought that he 'saw his way.'

No sooner had she carried through her anger-provoked, ill-advised programme, than Lady Angela began to repent. She had used Alan Stracy merely as a stick with which to beat the man she really loved. Why had she been so petulant? 'Why am I such a fool?' she asked herself, in plaintive tones, which (could he but have heard them) would have sent Thorndyke into convulsions of laughter.

When the men adjourned to the billiard-room, Stracy began making inquiries about the horse he was to ride for Lady Angela. And first he went to Lord Langston.

'Yes,' said the latter, as he leisurely pocketed the white, 'they tell me the horse is very fit, and ought to win. But I really take very slight interest in steeplechasing. My niece attends to all that now, and insists on running the horses in her own name, too! I think the Conqueror stands a great chance.' And then he went on to make a cannon, whilst Stracy strolled up to John Thorndyke, sitting somewhat moodily by the fire, and pulling at a long and unsympathetic cigar.

'Do you know anything about this animal of Lady Angela's?' began Stracy, very busy with his match-box.

Thorndyke was not inclined to be communicative.

'I believe he's a good horse. But Lady Angela told me that *you* have given a very decided opinion upon his merits and said that he would certainly win.'

Stracy had forgotten that, for the moment.

'Ye—s, oh, yes—I know the horse is very useful, of course. Saw him at Sandown. Steeplechasing's a queer kind of game—no certainty about it, when you see your money "up in the air." Still, I hope I shall win.' And then he strolled off, and soon after the party broke up.

* * * * *

The following morning dawned fine and clear; everything seemed propitious. Thorndyke turned out early, threw his casement open, and looked across the deer park. A light mist was rising from the lake beyond, giving promise of a fine day. And he cursed his luck when he thought of the disappointment and annoyance he had been so unexpectedly subjected to.

Lord Langston mounted the box-seat of his neatly turned-

out coach a little before midday ; and the clock was striking one when he drove across the racecourse into the reserved carriage enclosure. As he unbuckled the reins, and dropped them on the wheelers' backs, he turned to Thorndyke and said :

'Which is yours for the first race ? By the way, I hear you don't ride Angela's horse in the big event, after all. How's that ?'

Thorndyke put him off with some indefinite remark, and as his lordship really did not care twopence about racing, he pursued the subject no further. Angela had already dismounted from the coach when Thorndyke passed her on his way to dress for the first race. Then, with all a woman's waywardness, she turned to speak to him.

'I wish you good luck, Mr. Thorndyke,' she said. Then seeing that he was still unresponsive, she as suddenly 'repented of her repentance,' and her beautiful eyes blazed defiance again, as they looked straight into his.

'I suppose you are so offended at my asking Alan Stracy to ride, that you consider my act a crime past praying for ? Surely the owner of a horse may do as she thinks best !'

It was in a gentler tone—one with almost a touch of pleading in it, that the still angry girl went on : 'Men are always so unforgiving, and——'

He finished the sentence for her : '——and women so cruel !' he said.

And then he raised his hat, and walked across to the Grand Stand. Lady Angela followed him with her eyes, as far as the crowd permitted ; and then tossed her chin in the air, and went back to the coach.

Waiting patiently at the weighing-room door, stood Thorndyke's servant—a rugged-faced, iron-grey man of fifty, who had seen much service as the soldier servant of old General Thorndyke. He was devoted to 'Muster' John, as he still called his present master, and, *mirabile dictu* in these latter days, was absolutely uncorrupted and incorruptible.

'Will you just give me a minute, sir ?' said he, as the young man appeared.

'What is it, William ?' said Thorndyke, kindly.

'It's about the horse you were goin' to ride in the big race, to-day——'

'The Conqueror ?'

'Yes, sir. This mornin' as I was leanin' against the outer

side of the paddock palin's, who should I hear talkin' just inside, but Mr. Stracy and another. I looked through a crack in the fence, and saw it was Jim Burstow, the bookmaker. Mr. Stracy says : " Oh, it's all very easy—so *you* think—to stop a horse in a race like this. But the Stewards keep a pretty sharp look-out, nowadays, and I'm not going to run risks to be paid in acid drops ! The horse will start a hot favourite, and you can lay against him as if he was dead. You will get plenty of money out of him, but where do *I* come in ? You must put up a monkey—five hundred golden sovereigns, my good friend, for this job, or I don't undertake it ; if I were pulled up before the Stewards, I should be kicked out of every Club—every decent house—in London. Besides, as I say, it's the public, not you, who'll have to pay my five hundred. Anyhow, I won't do it for less—that's flat." Burstow grumbled out something which I couldn't catch, and then they moved away.'

Thorndyke's position was an awkward one. Could he now go to Lady Angela and put her on guard against this nefarious scheme ? She might, in her present angry mood, even suspect him of warping the truth in order to prevent Stracy riding, and to regain the mount for himself !

Meantime, the first race was to be decided. He hurriedly weighed out, and mounted, galloping down the course past Lord Langston's coach, without even momentarily turning his eyes in the direction of the party there.

Eight others went to the post for this race. Directly the flag fell, Thorndyke came along in front, and led over the first fence. His horse, Salute, continued to make the running until they went out of sight on the far side, and, as they reappeared, Sir Hildebrand on the top of the coach insinuated his rotund form into the best position for witnessing the rest of the race, and, adjusting his glasses, gave the assembled company the benefit of his descriptive powers.

' Ah—what's that in front ? Oh, I see—Thorndyke's horse, Salute—Orangeman close up, second ; I can't see what's next—something in red with black hoops—I think it must be Wolferton—and nothing else with a chance to win. Hallo ! what—why—yes, he's down ! Thorndyke's down at the drop fence !' (Lady Angela's face turned very white). ' No, I'm wrong, it was Orangeman that fell—Thorndyke is still leading' (the girl muttered a silent ' Thank God !' to herself). ' Orangeman's jockey is hurt'—for a mounted policeman having galloped down

and taken a hasty glance at the prostrate form, had waved his handkerchief as a signal for the ambulance, and already a rush of foot-people was being made for the spot. 'Thorndyke is still ahead, but his horse seems done; red and black hoops is catching him—no, I don't think he will, unless Salute comes down at the last fence. The horse looks too beat to clear it.' (Again Lady Angela's *suede*-gloved hands are tightly clasped together). 'Here they come—now for it! Ah, he's down!—no! he's just saved the fall, but that was touch and go—now he wins—wins in a canter!' and the General shut his glasses, and generously resigned his place—the race being over—to any one who chose to occupy it.

Ten minutes later, Thorndyke, a top-coat over his racing-jacket, crossed the course, and manfully approached one of the most unpleasant tasks which had ever yet fallen to his lot.

Lady Angela stood before the coach, and as she caught sight of him, a flush of gladness rose to her cheek, and a sense of victory filled her rebellious little heart. He could not keep away from her, then, in spite of his vexation at her conduct—conduct which she admitted to herself, richly deserved his anger. She was glad that he was so angry with her; it would have been maddening had he been indifferent! And now he was coming to capitulate, to—

But a single glance at John Thorndyke's face dispelled these illusions. There was no sign of surrender there. The girl looked up and merely uttered the one word: 'Well?'

'Lady Angela,' he said, 'I have found out, on evidence which quite satisfies me—that of my old servant, William Strong—that your horse is not intended to win the Grand Annual. Of course, you know that when a horse is as great a favourite in the ring as the Conqueror, it is far easier to make sure of winning money by his defeat than by his victory. I never deal in inuendo. Alan Stracy intends to stop your horse—and I shall be happy to meet that gentleman, and repeat to his face what I am now telling you in his absence.'

Lady Angela gave a little gasp. This was so entirely unexpected, and yet she had guessed all along what Mr. Alan Stracy was, and she should have been on her guard.

In her perplexity and distress, she turned for help to the strong, self-reliant man before her.

'What shall I do?' she asked, simply. No unworthy suspicion of interested motives, of his having exaggerated the

state of affairs in order to satisfy his own vanity, ever entered her mind. Thorndyke saw this, and felt accordingly grateful.

'He shall not ride,' she continued; 'people might say that *I* was making a profit out of this disgraceful thing!'

And fearsome visions of derisive cheers, and coarse hooting of the 'many-headed' rose before her half-frightened vision.

'What am I to do?' she repeated, looking at him rather helplessly. Then, before he could answer, she added: 'You must ride for me.'

'Forgive me, Lady Angela, that is impossible. You can very soon find a professional jockey for your horse; there are three now in the paddock at liberty to take a mount for the Grand Annual. If I can be of any service to you in engaging one of them——?'

'You won't ride for me?' she asked, flushing angrily. The old imperious manner was returning, and the short upper lip, beautiful as a budding rose, was curling as she spoke.

He shook his head in gentle, but firm negation. She flashed a glance of defiance, pride—and love—at him; and he read the first two plainly there, and, man-like, missed the third.

'I cannot,' he said, quietly.

'You will not!' she cried, bitterly; 'you will not!'

His tone was still gentle as he answered: 'You are angry, now; but I think that, later on, you will not be quite so hard upon me. You can send a note to Stracy, saying that you have changed your mind, and intend to employ a professional jockey to-day'—he generously forebore to remind her of the facility with which she had gone through the process of changing her mind on the previous evening. 'But although I would do much to help you, Lady Angela, there is a point beyond which a man—if he is to preserve his manhood—may not go. You have deposed me in favour of Stracy. I should be the last to question your right; but to ask me to take his place now! Surely you must see that such a thing would place me in a thoroughly false position.'

'Very well, then,' cried the girl, impetuously, 'let Mr. Stracy ride! let him pull the horse; let the crowd hoot me off the course!' Then, moderating her tone, she added in freezingly sarcastic accents: 'And now, if you will kindly excuse me, I will go across to the stand, as I want to get a place from which to see my horse—win!'

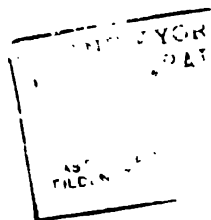
Thorndyke, with more sadness than anger in his heart, stood

aside to let her pass. With the very slightest inclination of her head, she swept by him, and went across towards the Stand.

Sir Hildebrand Ogleton, as the time for the decision of the Grand Annual approached, desisted from his favourite occupation of drinking champagne, and again edged his way into the best place on the coach. Then he brought his glasses to bear upon the ten competitors as they cantered down to the starting-post. Amongst them all, the Conqueror, a big chestnut horse, was pre-eminently the equine aristocrat. Alan Stracy's face was inscrutable as he rode down the brilliant strip of green turf, lined on either side by the crowd of sight-seers. He was calmly counting up in his mind what his personal 'takings' over the race would be.

'They're off!' exclaimed Sir Hildebrand; 'Hercules is leading, Pilot lying second; can't see what the third horse is—something in green and black. The Conqueror is fourth, and all the rest in a heap. Now they're turning for the brook—the Conqueror is going up to the thing in green and black—he has passed him—now they're coming at it—Hercules is over, Pilot next, then Conqueror and all of them safely across. Pilot and Hercules are close together—ah! Pilot has refused—Hulcot has come down—jockey's not hurt; he's on his feet already. They're just going out of sight now, and the Conqueror is lying second. My dear Lord Langston, might I ask for another glass of champagne? So sorry to give any trouble, but I find that repeated small doses—as you know, I never take more than a glassful at a time—of champagne, entirely keep off those attacks of—ah! thanks—yes, that's better. Here they come again—why Conqueror has dropped right back now. Rufus and Moscow are in front—yes, Conqueror is out of it—the race clearly lies between Rufus and Moscow—they are coming to the last fence; now for it!'

As Sir Hildebrand had said, the race looked a certainty for one of the pair now approaching the last fence. About a hundred yards away strode the grand-looking chestnut horse carrying Lady Angela's colours—white, with dark green sleeves and cap. The Conqueror was going quite at his ease, his rider sitting with his shoulders hunched, and a self-satisfied grin on his face. He had taken advantage of the few moments which elapsed whilst the horses were out of sight of those on the Stand, to pull right back into the rear, and let the now leading horses pass him. He knew that it would be impossible for the



Conqueror to catch them up, with the winning-post so close, and he cantered along, third, quite certain that Rufus and Moscow must be first and second; that arrangement was much safer than risking a close finish. And Mr. Alan Stracy was not performing this trick for the first time in his life.

Already Lady Angela heard angry murmurs of a somewhat disconcerting character. 'What's wrong with the favourite?' 'Why doesn't Stracy let him come along?' 'The horse is still pulling hard!' 'Don't believe the jockey's trying a yard!' 'He could win easily if he liked!' &c.

And then a dull, terrifying, raucous-voiced growl from the crowd saluted the frightened girl. The horse was going to lose when he might have won. She—she—Lady Angela, the victim of this rascally conspiracy, would be hissed at—hissed at on the course! Her face burned and tingled—never before had she so railed at her own folly; never had her love and admiration for the man who had tried to save her from its consequences, been so strong.

And just then the unexpected happened. The hoarse, ill-tempered roar of the crowd, raised as a demonstration against the suspicious way in which the favourite was being ridden, suddenly changed into a shorter, sharper sound; for, at the last fence, Rufus's jockey had gained an advantage of about half a length, and led over, landing a couple of yards in front of his most formidable foeman, Moscow. But Rufus, hurried off his legs, stumbled badly as he reached earth again, and blundered down on to his knees and head. The next moment, shrieks of horror rent the air, as Moscow, following him too closely, jumped right on top of the prostrate horse and jockey, and the four living creatures, men and beasts, were writhing and rolling over each other on the ground.

With the greatest difficulty, the police kept the crowd back until the other horses had jumped the fence, and passed on up the straight.

Alan Stracy, grinding his teeth in impotent rage, was forced, *nolens volens*, to come on and win, and thereby lose the rich reward promised him as the fruits of his villainy. For a moment, he thought of pretending to have an accident, and slipping off down his horse's shoulder; but he was too near the Steward's Stand; his heart failed him; he dared not.

The two injured jockeys had hardly been removed to the ambulance room, and the fallen horses got on their feet again—Rufus so badly hurt that the merciful bullet was requisitioned to

end his sufferings, whilst Moscow had escaped with only a few scratches—when the saddling-bell rang for the next race. Thorndyke was riding a four-year-old, making its *début* in public, and he hurried off to weigh out.

Anxious to avoid meeting Alan Stracy alone, Lady Angela had left the Stand directly after the Conqueror passed the post, and walked away to the far side of the course. She wanted to be alone; so avoiding the 'sensational' obstacles, such as the brook and the open ditch, she walked on, until she came to a fence which the competitors had to jump, just before making the turn for home. Here she sat down on a fallen tree-trunk, rested her chin in her hands, and indulged in a moody day-dream.

From this profitless reverie she was suddenly aroused by the distant trampling of rapidly approaching horses. She sprang to her feet and ran down to the white-painted rails by the thick thorn fence, to see them jump. Over the brow of a slight hill came the half-dozen brightly clad riders, the horses breathing hard, in seeming unison with their own hoof-beats. Onward they came, thundering down towards the fence at which she stood. Lady Angela could see Thorndyke's light blue jacket leading. The four-year-old was evidently in a wild state of excitement, as he galloped along, fighting desperately for his head. All the six were close together, and the young one led by a length. Thorndyke bent forward and back, as, with reins twisted round his hands, he exerted all his strength to steady the fiery, hot-headed bay. As they reached the fence, there was a shout, a great crash, and the next moment Thorndyke was lying, senseless and white-faced, on the far side of the obstacle, whilst the rest of the field swept heedlessly on.

In an instant, Angela was by his side. The four-year-old had blundered, fallen, and rolled over his rider; then, rising to his feet, wild-eyed and staring, the horse galloped madly on, in pursuit of his fast-disappearing fellows. Angela, in silent agony, knelt down, tore open the collar and silk jacket, and placed her hand upon the feebly beating heart of the man she loved; then she chafed his hands, watching eagerly for any sign of returning life. But the moments passed and the sign was still withheld. A sudden horror seized her; she bent over him swiftly, and kissed the marble forehead.

'Oh, Jack, Jack!' she moaned, 'I love you, I love you! Speak to me! look at me! if you die, I shall die too!'

And, as though in answer to her prayer, a faint flicker of returning life came into John Thorndyke's face. The eyes slowly opened—and recognised her. As they closed again, and he slipped once more into the outer darkness, Angela's face was near him, and Angela's hand buoyed up his heavy head 'above the great water-floods.' A few minutes later, and assistance came; the usual melancholy retinue of police and ambulance men, and the curious, dirty, gaping crowd; the injured man was gently raised, and slowly borne away.

* * * * *

A window in Clubland. Two 'well-groomed' men are exchanging items of news; the one telling of the 'shining East' from which he has only just returned; the other of England, and especially of English hunting gossip.

The latter is speaking. 'Jack Thorndyke?—after his accident he was taken to Wildwood, and there, for nearly two months, Lady Angela nursed him, night and day—she wore herself to a shadow—no, you wouldn't think it of her, would you?—doesn't seem that sort, somehow; but I had it all from Langston, so I know it's true. She never seemed to eat or sleep the whole time that he lay between life and death.'

'And Thorndyke?' asked the other anxiously.

'Thorndyke's ridden his last steeplechase; he——'

—'Dead?'

The other laughed merrily. 'Not a bit of it. He's so very much alive that he's going to marry Lady Angela next week, and I am to be at the wedding. But until he swore not to ride in silk again, she said 'No' to all his pleadings; and he didn't hold out long! To put temptation out of his way, she has sold the Conqueror——'

'I see,' broke in his friend, laughing, 'Lady Angela gets rid of one Conqueror in order to take another!'

NOTES ON NOVELTIES.

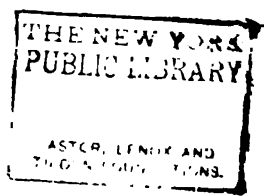


MOL. E. N. HENRIQUES' Patent Mouthing System for training and controlling unbroken and difficult horses is—to judge by the testimonials it has received—an eminently practical and successful invention. It is manufactured by Champion & Wilton, the well-

known saddlers of 457 Oxford Street, and consists of an elastic band passing over the horse's nose to each side of the bit and connected to the mouth, or some part of the cheeks of the bit, and is so fixed as to prevent the horse getting his tongue over the bit, at the same time avoiding friction or abrasions, and preventing the horse counteracting the proper action of the bit by resistance or defence. It is claimed for this appliance that, while not exerting undue pressure, it gives a more balanced, even, and nicer control, and preserves a 'new mouth.'

ADMIRERS of Finch Mason's breezy sketches, abounding as they do in the richest humour, will welcome the last volume, which has been produced by Treherne & Co., at a popular price, and is entitled *The Run of the Season*. In the twenty-six interesting pages that comprise the volume, it is quite refreshing to come across our old favourites, the Hon. 'Bob' Grimston and Major Whyte Melville. The letterpress, that records a day with the Vale of Buttercupshire Hounds, is good reading—and not the least important part of the work.





FORES'S SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

INTERNATIONAL POLO AND PLAYERS.

By CUTHBERT BRADLEY.

THE Polo events of the Coronation year go to mark an era in the history of the game, for unquestionably the Internationals have proved a liberal education to the rising generations of players. When we consider that five and twenty years ago, polo was hardly known beyond the confines of our Eastern possessions, it is truly marvellous how the game has developed in so short a space of time. The development of polo in recent years is only less remarkable than that of golf, for the game now flourishes in France, Spain, Germany, and Russia, whilst New Zealand can claim sixty clubs, the United States and Canada about fifty polo clubs, Australia plays the game, and there are at least twenty clubs in the Argentine Republic of South America. In India every regiment and station has its polo club, so that it is calculated there are about five hundred known existing polo clubs scattered throughout the world. Those who are fond of figures may study Mr. Josiah Newman's wonderful International Polo Club Guide, published this season, for there he calculates there are in existence 10,000 players, and no fewer than 30,000 polo ponies. At home the game increases in popularity and gains strength in numbers every season, for in spite of the troubles in South Africa, which have robbed us of our soldier players, the backbone of polo, new clubs have sprung into life and flourished.

Nothing in the polo world has ever exercised so much general interest, as the International encounters that have taken place during the past season. Now that American polo is so

much in evidence it will be of interest briefly to record the progress of the game in the United States. It was introduced there by Mr. James Gordon Bennett, about the year 1876, but for a good many years its development was slow. In 1886 Mr. John Watson took over a Hurlingham team consisting of himself (back), Captain Hone and the Hon. R. I. Lawley, both of the 7th Hussars, and Captain Little, 9th Lancers. The combination of our men and the excellence of their ponies came as a revelation to American polo players, who were completely outclassed in the first contest for the International Cup, and their defeat gave a fresh impetus to polo on the other side of the Atlantic. At a dinner given by Mr. John Cowdin (a member of the challenging teams this season) in New York, to the representatives of various clubs, in 1899, the American Polo Association was formed, and at the present time nearly thirty polo clubs are affiliated to it. Scarcely anything has been talked about in the polo world this summer, but the bold bid made by our American visitors to regain possession of the International polo cup. Despite the chilly weather, large and fashionable crowds assembled on each occasion that the Americans took the field, and they deserve all credit for the brave fight they made for the Cup, for they had much to handicap them, playing under strange rules, and on soft ground.

The immense attendance at Hurlingham even in weather when play was doubtful, proves the hold polo now has on the public. At the first game it was estimated that nearly 9000 people, representative of the rank and fashion of the London season, were spectators, and no less than 1150*l.* was taken at the gate, which is exclusive of the regular members and is the largest amount ever received at any polo match in this country. There is not the least doubt that although it will ever be a sport for the classes, rather than the masses, the latter would flock to see it were they but given the opportunity to watch representative games. It is full of incident, and the fact that horseflesh takes a very prominent part, renders it just the game in which the average Englishman delights.

The Royal day of the season was June 10th, when the King and Queen honoured Ranelagh with their presence. Nothing was wanting to make the afternoon a great success, for the weather was fine and bright, and the match between the Americans and Ranelagh resulted in an exciting game. This was the first game of polo ever played in the presence of

an English sovereign, although both the King and Queen frequently witnessed polo before their accession. Their Majesties, who drove down over Hammersmith Bridge, were accompanied by Princess Victoria, and Prince and Princess Charles of Denmark, being received on their arrival by Dr. George Hastings, Vice-Chairman, and the members of the Club Committee. Lady Gosford, Miss Knollys, and General Sir Stanley Clarke, were in attendance, and Lord Lonsdale was also present in the Royal box. Both the King and Queen watched the whole of the game with the greatest interest, for from start to finish it was keenly contested, and His Majesty had quite a long talk with Lord Harrington, who has perhaps the longest record of any living player. There were nine coaches on the ground, including those of the Duke of Beaufort, Lord Lonsdale, Captain Burns Hartopp, and Dr. Hastings. Amongst the spectators were Lady Affleck, Lady Claude Hamilton, Lady Sherborne, Lady Kilmorey, Mrs. Rawlinson, Mrs. George Hastings and the Miss Hastings, Sir Perry Van Notten Pole, Lord Shrewsbury, Lord Haddington, Sir Pertab Singh, Captain Egerton Green, Sir George Wombwell, Mr. W. Buckmaster, Mr. George Miller, Sir Walter Smythe, Mr. John Watson, Mr. W. A. Hazard, hon. secretary of the Polo Association, New York, and a great number of Americans. Before leaving, all the players had the honour of being presented to the King, Mr. Foxhall Keene and his team being introduced by Mr. White of the American Embassy. The scratch team which represented Ranelagh were Captain L. C. B. Jenner, Messrs. A. Rawlinson, F. A. Gill, H. Scott Robson, who gave the Americans a very good game, finally gaining a well-deserved victory by six goals to five. Towards the end there was plenty of galloping, and the game was both fast and exciting. Mr. Rawlinson made several fine runs, Captain Jenner was an admirable No. 1, Mr. Scott Robson played a good game at back, and Mr. Gill fairly surpassed himself. For the Americans Mr. Foxhall Keene was brilliant as usual, Mr. J. E. Cowdin ably supported him, and the brothers Waterbury worked hard for the honour of the 'Stars and Stripes.'

It is many years since we experienced such disastrous weather for polo; virtually it was raining throughout the whole month over which the three International matches at Hurlingham extended, and the Americans never had the chance of showing what they could do on a really hard ground. The American

team went into training for the contest, practising for many weeks under the new conditions of rules, regarding 'off-side' and crooking of sticks.

The command an American in training has over himself is to be commended, and throughout the practice games of the polo teams, all drank as little as possible, more often than not rinsing out their mouths with weak quinine and water, rather than swallow any liquid at all. An international contest being too serious a matter to treat flippantly!

Until this season American polo was to the majority of players over here an unknown quantity, although Mr. Foxhall Keene, the captain of the team, has played in England two seasons and won golden opinions. The challenge was duly cabled to Hurlingham at the close of last year, and the American string of ponies, about five-and-twenty, bred on the western cattle ranches for use in 'cow-punching,' were shipped over early in January, in order that they might have plenty of time to get acclimatised. The players followed soon afterwards, and during the few weeks that they spent at Rugby, practising under English rules, they created an excellent impression. Their *début* in London was a veritable triumph, and the brilliant exposition of striking that they gave, their amazing quickness on the ball, and the handiness of their ponies, came as a positive revelation to the spectators. Mr. Foxhall Keene, their captain, unfortunately met with a severe accident at the end of the hunting season which prevented him playing for some weeks, but he recovered in time to take his place in the team for the first cup-match. In the handicap of the American Polo Association the five men are rated as follows:—Mr. Foxhall Keene, ten; Mr. J. M. Waterbury, ten; Mr. John E. Cowdin, nine; Mr. Lawrence Waterbury, nine; Mr. R. L. Agassiz, eight. The highest rating is ten, and Messrs. Keene and Waterbury are the only players in the country handicapped so severely.

The American ponies did well, though they do not show so much class as our best English ponies, but they are likely to be in great demand for the game. In appearance they are short and compact with plenty of substance, handy mounts who acted well in the deep ground. One or two were exceptionally fast, notably Mr. Foxhall Keene's Texania and Mr. J. E. Cowdin's States, the latter having been credited in the States with covering a quarter of a mile in twenty-three seconds.

As a team the Americans played together with a unity and

precision only equalled by the Rugby team of last year. The players, too, were very quick on the ball, and able to hit it effectively whatever the position of the pony relatively to the ball might be. To be able to make such effective strokes on the near-side as well as the off-side of the pony saves time and baffles the enemy. Mr. L. Waterbury, who played back for his side, was particularly brilliant on the near-side with back-handers, and offered a most stubborn defence to his goal.

No mistake was made in under-estimating the strength of the opposition when choosing the English team. It was fully recognised, and the Hurlingham Selection Committee spared no pains to choose the best side available, having a due regard to recent form and the question of combination. Mr. Cecil Nickalls, No. 1, fully justified his selection, and gave a splendid exhibition of horsemanship when riding off. That Mr. W. Buckmaster would be one of the team was a foregone conclusion, for there is no finer player to-day. Unfortunately Mr. George Miller was suffering from an accident and was not available for the first match, but Mr. P. W. Nickalls and Mr. Charles Miller maintained their reputation as first-class players. During the progress of the great contest the English team underwent several changes, for Mr. F. Freake played in the second match, but was prevented through illness from playing in the final.

The first match was played in fair weather, though the ground was soft and slow. It was estimated that nearly 9000 people assembled, everybody who was anybody being present. Royalty was represented by Prince Arthur of Connaught; the Army by Earl Roberts, who was accompanied by Countess Roberts and daughters; the Navy by Captain Hedworth Lambton, and politics by Mr. Winston Churchill. During the progress of the game a special correspondent was cabling to New York every twenty minutes a detailed description of the incidents. Although the betting was three to one on England the challengers won the first match, although we were pressing during the greater part of the match—indeed, we did everything but score goals. The Americans' strength lay in their defence, and they knew it, Mr. L. Waterbury's splendid hitting and tactics being the feature of the game.

Truth to tell it was not a great game to watch, for only in the last five minutes was there free galloping and a brilliant goal. Throughout most of the hour the players were bunched

up together, the backs not being over a hundred feet apart. These were so clever and so fast that they packed the others together at will, and made such a solid wall that, five or six times in succession, strokes that would have been long drives were stopped by ponies' legs. In saying that England was unlucky to be beaten by two goals to one, we are not attempting to explain away a defeat; it was surely the hardest of luck to have two goals disallowed, the one for off-side play, and the other because one of the Americans was off his pony just as the hit for the goal was being made. It was apparent that both sides were suffering from nervousness, and the number of misses, even by the surest shots, was phenomenal, the ground being in a very cut-up state. The American section of the crowd were jubilant, and it was amusing to see the Stars and Stripes unfurled and proudly fluttered on the success of the challengers.

A change was made in the English side for the second match, Mr. George Miller's presence as captain giving confidence to the team. Mr. F. Freake, too, replaced Mr. P. Nickalls, and played in his old form. Mr. Cecil Nickalls again showed himself as a great No. 1, and his splendid riding opened the way for several of England's goals. Mr. W. Buckmaster was 'safe as houses' playing back, and in far better form than when playing in the first match. The Americans played a stubborn losing game, and for the best part of the hour were defending. Had it not been for the admirable play of Mr. Waterbury we should undoubtedly have won by a very much larger margin than we actually did. Always cool and collected he was never at a loss what to do, and times without number stopped an almost certain goal by a back-hander. Mr. Foxhall Keene and his two forwards played, as usual, with great dash and judgment, but they were seldom able to get down to the English goal. Although England won by six goals to one, it was a hard-fought game.

The final game, after being postponed three times on account of weather, was played on a very soft ground, but the assembled crowd presented much the same brilliancy as at the first match, amongst the spectators being Lord Roberts and his A.D.C., Lord Fitzmaurice. Among other spectators of army polo were Major Maclaren, D.S.O., Captain E. D. Miller, D.S.O., Captain Neil Haig, and Major Vaughan, 7th Hussars, whom everybody was sorry to see hobbling about on crutches as the result of his

recent severe wounds at the front. Among the American players who were watching the momentous match were Mr. Hazard and Mr. Collier, just back from the Hamburg tournament, while Spanish and French polo was represented by the Marquis de Villavieja, and his brother, M. E. de Escandon. Mr. H. Cumberland Bentley, the polo laureate, was also there, with the Messrs. Peat and famous polo-players without number. An alteration was made in the composition of each team, Mr. Patteson Nickalls again playing No. 2 for England, the change in the American team being Mr. J. M. Waterbury instead of Mr. J. E. Cowdin. The English scored the first goal, then the Americans held their own, but as the game progressed the English team outrode their adversaries, faster ponies and better horsemanship telling. Mr. George Miller made a splendid captain, and to him more than to any other belongs the credit of keeping the cup at home. The match ended with a score of seven goals to England and one to America, the visitors, without a hope of winning, playing on pluckily to the bitter end. After the match Lord Roberts complimented the players on the fine game, and presented a silver cigarette-box to each of the American team, as a memento of the occasion, expressing a hope that the visitors will come over again.

The America Challenge Cup—as it has now come to be styled—remains in the possession of the Hurlingham Club, and is a very handsome piece of plate. The cup itself is egg-shaped with three handles; the three panels between these handles contain respectively the inscription ‘International Polo Cup presented by the Westchester Polo Club, U.S.A.’; an etching of the two central figures taken from Mr. Thomas Earl’s well-known picture of a polo match played at Hurlingham on July 7th; 1877, and the arms of England and the United States. Grouped round the upper base, which is of solid silver, are six mounted polo-players, the space between each being filled in with heavy scroll-work; while the lower portion of the base, or foot, is covered with shields. One of the conditions affecting the play is that the rules of the country holding the cup shall be the rules under which the challengers must play.

Three dinners were given to the American team: on the first occasion they were the guests of Sir Patterson Nickalls and the Polo Pony Society. The company numbered about one hundred, and included His Highness the Maharajah of Kooch Behar, the Earl of Lonsdale, the Earl of Southampton, Lord A.

Cecil, Sir Walter Smythe, the Right Hon. R. W. Hanbury, Mr. R. W. Hudson, and a very representative polo gathering.

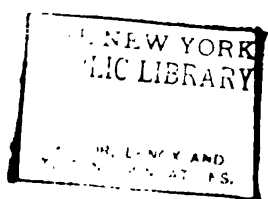
On the second occasion the American team were the guests of the Ranelagh Club Committee, with Dr. Hastings, the vice-chairman presiding, and the dinner was delightfully friendly and informal, speechifying being wholly barred. The gathering in the beautiful club-rooms of the old Kit Kat Club was a very representative one of polo enthusiasts, and comprised such names as those of the Earl of Harrington, the Earl of Shrewsbury, Lord Mayo, Sir Walter Smythe, Sir Patteson Nickalls, Mr. A. Rawlinson, Mr. John Watson, Major Peters, Mr. Scott Robson, Captain Egerton Green, Mr. G. L. St. Quintin, Mr. Hazard, Mr. W. Buckmaster, Colonel Fenwick, the brothers Miller and Nickalls, Mr. F. A. Gill.

After the final match the Hurlingham Club entertained the challengers at Princes' Restaurant. It was especially noteworthy that Lord Roberts, who presided, highly eulogised polo as a game for soldiers. Such an expression of opinion from the Commander-in-Chief is of immense importance. The fine record of polo-players in the late war, which was alluded to by Lord Roberts, is evidence that a man who succeeds at polo is likely to distinguish himself in the sterner game of war. Here again the Americans have offered the old country a wrinkle worth taking, for whilst we have been discussing the advisability of polo on the score of expense in the army, the American Government are so convinced of its value for officers, that they are encouraging the game in every way at West Point, probably the best military academy in the world, and have actually bought ponies for the use of the cadets.

Certainly the visit of the American polo-players to this country marks an era in the history of the game, and is calculated to benefit polo on both sides of the Atlantic in a marked degree.



The Royal day at Ranelagh



THE ROMANCE OF THE TURF.

By FINCH MASON.

IT will, I think, be pretty generally admitted that the age we live in gets more and more unromantic every day.

Of sensation there is, if anything, a superabundance—indeed, nowadays we never know what will happen next. But then there is a wide distinction between sensation and romance.

Take matrimony: A romantic marriage is apparently a thing of the past; whilst as for a runaway match it is as extinct as the Dodo.

Formerly there was some credit attached to running off with your dearest friend's wife, inasmuch that you had to face the injured husband's pistol 'at ten or fifteen paces' afterwards.

That's where the romance came in, especially if one or other of you were left 'quivering on a daisy.'

Nowadays the thing has become so common that no one takes any notice of it except Sir Francis Jeune, and he wouldn't unless he were obliged to.

Talking of duels reminds me of a story told me many years ago, when staying at a country house, by my host, of a distinguished general, whose name I forget, who made one of the party at the time.

The celebrated Lord Cardigan, of Bavaclava fame, who was rather given to that sort of amusement, ran off with his wife one fine day.

The very soul of honour, my lord, without waiting for the challenge he had every right to expect, wrote at once to the injured husband offering satisfaction in the usual manner for the wrong he had done him. The other as promptly replied declining the offer with thanks. His wounded honour, he said, had been more than satisfied by Lord Cardigan taking his wife off his hands.

What more romantic in its way I would ask than an umbrageous country lane—in 'sleepy' Sussex, say? It is in such a one that the recently married Edwin and Angelina are taking a stroll in the cool of the evening. Not a leaf stirs, and but for the lowing of cattle in the distance and an occasional burst

of revelry from the nearest hamlet, there is nothing to break the stillness of the summer night.

'How calm! how peaceful everything is!' murmurs Angelina, leaning contentedly on her husband's arm. 'Not a sound to be heard but——'

Phut! Phut! Phut! Whiz-Bang-G-r-r-r-r-r!

The honeymooners have hardly time to draw up close to the bank before a huge motor and its occupants of either sex so befurred and wrapped up as to suggest a trip to the North Pole, comes choking and bumping round the corner and by them at the rate of a hundred miles an hour, all but running over Edwin's favourite wire-haired terrier, and sending a shower of stones and dust in such dangerous proximity to the bride's pretty face as to cause Edwin to use language of anything but a romantic character, and Angelina to declare that the only way *she* can think of to prevent a recurrence of such an incident is for them to invest in a motor on their own account without a moment's loss of time.

Pretty soul, she has been longing to possess one for months past! And Edwin said he would think about it.

No, let the surrounding scenery be ever so romantic, it ceases to be so the moment a motor puts in an appearance. It looks nearly as much out of place, indeed, as a cigarette in the mouth of a ploughboy. It is a sign of the times that the demand at the little village shop for packets of 'Ogden's guinea gold' has quite eclipsed that of the half ounce of 'bacca hitherto affected by the rude forefathers of the hamlet. Offer an agricultural labourer of the present day a bit of tobacco, and the chances are the reply will be he hasn't got a pipe to put it in.

Of all the sufferers by modern innovations though, commend me to racing. I am speaking, of course, from a romantic point of view.

And this is a pity; for if there is one thing the regular race-goer—more especially the little punter—likes to know more than another, it is that there is a *souçon* of romance attached to the horse he has singled out as the probable winner of some great coming event.

This accounts in a great measure for the popularity of Sceptre with the outside racing public, for, with the exception of the Two Thousand Guineas, and possibly the Oaks, it is hardly probable that they can have profited much by her victories in a pecuniary sense. It is the romantic career of

her owner; his pluck in training the mare himself; and, last but not least, the 'never-say-die' policy he adopts with her on all occasions which constitute him a hero in their eyes. The cheer of the week which, according to 'Hotspur,' greeted Sceptre when she cantered in for the Nassau Stakes on the last day at Goodwood, after having been badly beaten on the Wednesday previous, was meant quite as much for Mr. Bob Sievier as for the mare, you may depend. Had she been the property of many another owner, the chances are they would have hooted her. Should Sceptre, fit and well on the day, follow in the footsteps of so many of her sex, and win the Leger, the ovation she and her plucky owner are pretty certain to meet with from the Tykes assembled on the town moor will indeed be something to remember.

A prominent writer on turf matters made the following startling statement the other day in his weekly article in a well-known illustrated journal, and I can readily believe what he says.

'I am told that quite thirty-three per cent of the bookmakers trading in Tattersall's ring are practically insolvent. I know of several big layers who have had to realise property recently so as to face the settling. The fact of the matter is, there are no swells betting now; the speculator is of a 'dog eat dog' policy, and if the truth must be told, the professional backers have a bit the best of it. They get to know the non-tries before the start, and invariably include the winner's name in little lots. The bookmaker as a gambler is a poor specimen at his best. He is a coward to the backbone if he thinks his customer knows anything. Age kills him. When he reaches the age of sixty, he begins to offer cramped odds, with the result smart backers go elsewhere, and he is left with a book only half round.'

What a very unromantic state of things to be sure! And who under the circumstances wouldn't welcome Mr. Bob Sievier and his Sceptre.

Not only are there no swells betting now, but as a matter of fact there are very few real swells on the turf at all, and of these the Dukes of Portland, Devonshire, and Westminster, Prince Soltykoff, Lords Derby, Durham, Wolverton, and Farquhar are the most prominent.

Never probably were there so many wealthy men on the turf as now, but hardly any of them bet, and the majority indulge

in the sport in such 'half-hearted' fashion as to make it appear—what is indeed not at all improbable—that they only do so because it is the proper sort of thing, don't you know.

These are the men who will buy or lease a horse (probably by cable from goodness knows where) for a huge sum on the eve of the Derby, and be disporting themselves at Timbuc-too, say, when he is winning it.

Nothing very romantic, I take it, about *that*.

On the other hand many of our wealthy owners, such as Mr. J. H. Houldsworth, Mr. James Lowther, Mr. Leopold de Rothschild, Captain Baird, and Sir Blundell Maple, run for pure love of the thing like the good sportsmen they are; the fact that all their horses are home bred rendering a victory in any one of their colours doubly welcome, not only to themselves but their friends the Public.

There are no more popular colours on the turf than the green and gold of Mr. Houldsworth and the blue and yellow of the house of Rothschild; and it is a matter of regret that these have not been more *en évidence*, than they have of late on our racecourses.

Never was such an enthusiastic old sportsman as the late Baron Meyer de Rothschild, and his greeting of Hannah with an affectionate kiss after winning the Leger, is most amusingly described by Miss Emily Soldene, the original Drogan of Genevieve de Brabant, in her book of Reminiscences published a year or two ago.

Talking of the Leger reminds the writer of a romantic little conversation he overheard between a couple of ragged tatterdemalions occupying the same seat as himself on the 'front' at Brighton, on the day that Galtee More won for Mr. John Gubbins, and who judging by the frequency with which one or other of them visited the newspaper office opposite, where the telegrams are posted up, were evidently interested in what was going on at Doncaster.

'Bill,' said one of them, 'I s'pose this 'ere old Gubbins is very fond of 'is 'orse, ain't 'e?'

'Fond!' exclaimed the other. 'Why, they tell me that after the Darby 'e was a 'ugging an' a kissin' of 'im, jest like—well, jest like a bloomin' tart. Fond! What do *you* think?'

To return again to Baron Rothschild. On the opening day of the Epsom summer meeting of 1871 he invited a few of his friends and retainers to come and have a look at Favonius in his box.

'There, gentlemen!' exclaimed the Baron proudly as the party were ushered into the presence of the mighty chestnut. 'Behold the winner of this year's Derby!'

Amongst those present was Gilbert, trainer to Mr. Savile, and the inspection over, he in his turn addressed the company. 'You've seen the winner of *this* year's Derby, gentlemen,' said he, 'if you'll come with me I'll show you *next* year's winner.'

With that he led them to the adjoining box where stood Cremorne, who was to make his *début* that very day in the time-honoured Woodcote Stakes.

Not bad tips those two.

There was not much of the romantic about the late Mr. James Merry, but he ran his horses as straight as a gun-barrel, backed them heavily, and was always present to see them win.

His colours were immensely popular in consequence, more so probably than those of any owner of his time.

It wouldn't have seemed like a Derby had there not been one of Mr. Merry's in the betting. Besides, he had a way with him quite his own.

What owner of the present day would have the moral courage to knock the boy who was riding for him out of the saddle when he returned to weigh in, to the accompaniment of 'Get oot o' that, ye young scoondrel!'

His compatriot 'Bob,' Duchess of Montrose, was not at all unlike him in this respect.

'What do you mean, man?' she demanded of Huxtable in her most imperative manner, as he rode back to the bird-cage one day at Newmarket after a race in which the all scarlet had figured ingloriously. 'What do you mean, man, by not coming away from the Bushes as I ordered you?'

'*Couldn't very well come away without the horse, your Grace!*' replied the imperturbable knight of the woeful countenance.

Though hers was not what one would call a romantic personality it was a very striking one, and so, no doubt, thought a certain witty French sportsman who, catching sight of the Duchess one day at Newmarket, attired as usual in the famous red costume, at once exclaimed delightedly, '*Ah, mon Dieu! une grosse tomate!*'

One thing is very certain, there was a good deal of romance attached to the Merry Duchess's third venture in the matrimonial line.

It is improbable the Turf will ever again go through such an

experience as what was called the 'Hastings Era,' nor would it be desirable it should; still there is no question but that an infusion of fresh blood of the right sort would be extremely welcome just now, if only to make things hum a bit.

Now the war is over perhaps it may get it.

THE SOMBRE CLOUD.

By 'STRAW HAT.'



FOR many seasons I have been in the habit, at certain periods of the year, of visiting the midland and eastern counties of England, mainly in the cause of cricket; but when, as it frequently happened, that I became cast in any well-watered spot, where good coarse fishing was to be had, I smeared a coating of oil upon the blades of my brace of bats, and betook myself to my case of rods, that always accompanied me in my travels. It is many years now, for my wanderings date from the middle of the sixties, that the events described in the following article occurred; but I think that they are of sufficient interest to warrant me in raking them from the tablets of my memory, and in submitting them to the public and my editor.

I had just completed a three weeks' tour, with Sir H. Bromley's cricket team, and with them had visited several of the cricket centres within easy reach, notably Peterborough, Grantham, Newark, &c., when I found myself located at the Trent Bridge Hotel at Nottingham, after a long day's trial of the water in Sir H. Bromley's estate.

While waiting to cross the Trent, at the ferry on the road home, I was joined by an angler, whom I had noticed ledgering for barbel in the same stretch of water that I had been fishing. We soon knocked up an acquaintance, and, on comparing notes, discovered that we were bound for the same hostelry on Trent-side, so that we then and there elected to have our meals together, until we parted company at the end of the week. On arriving at the hotel we changed our attire, and sat down to a most enjoyable dinner, to which both of us did ample justice. Dinner over, we mixed our grog, and as the night was chilly, we elected to have it warm, drew our chairs up to the table, and

lighted up our pipes, for a review of the day's catch. From fishing yarns, we very soon drifted into racing, and while I entertained him with reminiscences of the racing town of which I was an inhabitant, he delighted me with rollicking stories of New Zealand and Australian adventures, in connection with the 'sport of kings.' One of these I propose offering for the perusal of my readers.

I am (he began) a native of this part of the world, in fact, my property is situated rather less than forty miles from Nottingham. At the age of fourteen I was sent by my father to one of the big public schools, where I sailed along with the stream of three hundred boys, until, at the age of eighteen, I found myself in the upper sixth, and going well for the top of it. I was captain of the eleven, and a good medium-pace bowler. At football, as I possessed a turn of speed, my post was 'half-back,' for we played Rugby; Father Alcock, of Kennington fame, not having at that time invented the Association game. In the same form with me was a youngster, about my own size and weight, so to speak, who was so unfortunate as to nearly always play second violin to my first. His name was Rowton, and as we were from the same neighbourhood, we were well acquainted, in fact our families were upon intimate terms, visiting each other frequently. At the period of which I am speaking, we were the best of friends; but the frequency with which I 'topped the bar,' so to speak, in the school examinations, where Rowton was also a candidate, seemed to cast a shadow over him, so that by the end of my last term but one, when I gained several of the principal school prizes for form work, and obtained the best averages for batting and bowling, besides being selected for the captaincy of our team in the coming football term, a kind of coolness had sprung up between us.

When the school broke up for the midsummer vacation, I put myself out of the way to make things agreeable for him, by travelling to London in the same compartment. We even rode in the same hansom across London, and to our station at home in the same first-class carriage. I also attempted to drive away the haze that had settled between us, by being as cordial towards him as I possibly could be; but to very little purpose.

'It's of no use, old fellow,' he said, 'your wide-spread influence upon me seems to shadow me like a huge pair of out-stretched wings. Do what I will, they always seem to be over me, like the sombre cloud that followed old Ralph Nickleby until his death.'

I condoled with him, and tried to make him take a more cheerful view, but to very little purpose ; but we parted apparently the best of friends. During the next term, my last at school, we saw very little of each other. In spite of my overtures for a closer bond between us, I could see that my company was undesirable, and so I ceased to persevere any further in that direction.

Time wore on ; I went up to Oxford, while he departed for the sister University. Living as we did upon the Trent, it was quite natural that we should both be good oarsmen—all we wanted was that polish which each would get at his University to turn us out first-class oars. I was in the boat, and when I perused the Cambridge list, after the trial eights had been rowed, I saw Rowton's name as rowing upon No. 6 thwart. At Putney, during our stay there for practice, we seldom met, each avoiding the other. On the race-day I rowed No. 7. We chose the Surrey side, having won the toss, and both crews got away to an even start. They took the lead at once, and held it to Hammer-smith, when we could hear by the roar on the shore, and see by the waving of hands on the steamer, that we were upon them. At last, for a brief second, I had a view of the stern of the boat 'coming back' to us. By Chiswick Eyot we were alongside of them, when, contrary to all rule, I stole a glance at Rowton, only to catch his eye upon me, with a fiendish look, that betokened harm at some future time. In another minute I was level with 'bow,' and in 'Corney Reach' we began to wash them. At Barnes we led by four lengths, and finally won by five.

After the dinner I saw Rowton no more until the completion of my University course, when I accidentally met him in the High Street of our town, as I was walking with my sister, and a lady friend, whom I had known from childhood. We came full plump upon him, as he turned the corner, when he started as if an adder had stung him, then passing on, as though we were strangers to him. But I marked his bitter look of malice, and saw the deadly paleness of his countenance.

'Did you notice Rowton,' asked my sister, 'how angry he looked ?'

'And his extraordinary paleness ?' said Miss Wade, my lady friend.

'Whatever was the cause of it ?' they both remarked.

But I passed the remarks off lightly, and directed their attention to other matters.

About three months afterwards, I received the offer of a good business in New Zealand. I took advantage of it, proposed to

Emma Wade, was accepted, and we were married. In New Zealand my affairs prospered so well that in a very few years I had made my pile. I was always fond of the turf, and so I started a small stud, which proved so lucrative, that I substantially added to my private account at my banker's. Thinking that I should have a better chance in Australia, I determined to shift, taking my small but select stud of horses with me.

And now (continued Mr. Gibson, for that was his name) comes the most remarkable part of my story. Everything appeared to go well with me. I won several good races in the neighbourhood where I resided, and at last determined to strike for higher game. A meeting was advertised to take place about one hundred miles from our station, and I entered one of my nags for the big handicap, travelling over by the cars to see the horse run, and taking my wife with me. The hotel where we arranged to stay was adjacent to the station, so we decided to walk across to our rooms. You may judge of my astonishment and annoyance when, on ascending the steps of the hotel, I met Rowton, with a lady whom I subsequently found to be his wife, just emerging. Not even by look or sign did he betray his knowledge of us; but we passed each other as though we had never met before.

In a week the race was advertised to come off, and, looking through the entries, I saw that Mr. Rowton's Alaric was entered, and the weight assigned to him was 7 st. 6 lb. My horse, Cart-ridge, was given 8 st. There were fourteen entries, so that I thought I might be able to secure a good price against my own. During the interval I determined to try my horse upon the track to which the hotel was attached. This track was a trifle less than a mile in circumference, and any horse that could complete the circuit in 1 min. 30 secs. was supposed to possess an 'A 1' chance of catching the judge's eye. A big cricket match was to take place just before the race-meeting, and I thought this would provide me with the opportunity, which was so necessary to me, to give Cartridge his trial spin. The 'rough-up' was brought off successfully, when, to my intense joy, I found the time of the trial to be 1 min. 28 secs. This was so good that I could scarcely believe it; but on going over the horse's tracks with the chain, we found that it was all correct. But in spite of the good trial, Cartridge, to my surprise, went steadily back in the betting, until 8 to 1 was offered. On mentioning the matter to my wife, she gave me the following explanation.

'When you were trying Cartridge, you imagined that everybody of consequence was away at the match, and so they were with one exception, *Rowton's wife*. I was about to watch the trial from the windows above, when I heard the rustle of silk upon the landing below. Looking over I saw her running across the landing with an *egg-boiler* in her hand. I knew at once what her intention was, and determined, if possible, to baulk her. The trial was over when her maid fetched her to attend to something below. I slipped into her room to capture, if possible, that egg-boiler. I found it lying flat between the backs of two books, and covered by her handkerchief. On looking narrowly at it, I could tell that there was less sand in the globe nearest the window than in the one nearest the door. My first thoughts were in favour of breaking it, but I did nothing of the kind, I simply turned it over on its side again, carefully *reversing the ends*. I again covered it with the handkerchief, and waited on the landing above till she returned, which she did in about three minutes. By simply running out the sand in the globe nearest the window, her husband would get the *supposed* time of Cartridge for the trial. If you subtract 1'28 from 3, that will give you 1'32, and my idea is that they are betting on that, as 1'32 is as bad as 1'28 is good.'

I put on 400*l.* and easily obtained nine to one, and Cartridge won by a length, with Alaric second. Rowton's face was awful to see, and his glance as I passed him, was simply demoniacal.

'Damn you!' he ejaculated as he passed me at the gate, and stormed into the hotel. I remained behind to collect my winnings, and to send my horse home; while my wife returned the day before I did.

'Be careful of Rowton, Harry,' was my wife's caution as she left. 'I am persuaded that he means ill to you.'

I laughed at her fears, but determined to keep a good watch upon his actions.

The next day I sauntered down to the station, with the notes, and some two hundred pounds in gold, in a wallet which I had placed in my inside waistcoat pocket. The race-goers had left, and there were but five persons on the platform. Three of these were busy with their own affairs, but I thought that the remaining two were dogging me. When the cars came in I allowed the men to pass me, and quickly—and quietly, as I thought—dodged into an empty compartment. They were, however, as sharp as I was, for I had hardly settled myself

when they blundered in, taking the opposite places. What was I to do? I certainly had my revolver, but they might get first pull, and then, probably, they would secure my wallet, and throw me out upon the track. My mind was made up on the instant. The cars were on the move—I waited until they had acquired a fair speed, when I turned the handle of the door, jumped out upon the platform, slamming the door behind me.

Never shall I forget the looks of baffled rage of the two men, when they found their quarry had slipped through the net. They crowded the window, and one stretched out his arm to undo the handle; but the train was going too fast now for them to alight. I thought I saw a pistol pointed, but it was not fired. I waited for three hours, and taking the next car, reached home in safety, when I related the adventure to my wife.

I never saw Rowton again, for he found it convenient to clear out. But I heard of him—for a year afterwards his body was found in one of the outlying districts, with a spear-hole in his breast: no doubt robbed and murdered by some tribe of natives, who had camped near the spot.

WARM WANDERINGS.

By KIRLY HARE.

ABOUT an hour or so before sunset 'Gassy' Longhurst and I, high up on Ometepe, turned to descend the Island mountain-side. Around us was forest, barring a break on the left where ran a small rill of water between steep barrancas. The stream itself, mostly invisible, was choked with bamboos and cotton-wood, or foamed down beneath broad leaves of water-plants. Close, stifling atmosphere encompassed the island, and dun-coloured woolly clouds hung everywhere overhead. I felt as though in an oven. Presently came an eddy of wind which blew quite cool, and the sky suddenly began to darken.

'Looks like a storm of some sort,' I remarked, as birds twittered nervously and the air grew colder and darker.

'Blowed if I don't think we're in for a blazing ouragan,' declared my companion, after what seemed to me an uneasy survey of the surroundings.

'What may that tropical animal be when it's at home?' I asked, smiling at what I took to be Gassy's inventive talent in the language line.

'It may be any infernal sort of devil or heavenly wildfowl, or any thundering thing in creation,' growled Gassy, 'when it's at home. I never saw it at home. I was called upon once by the buster when it was out on the rampage, and I don't covet another visit from any ouragan as long as I live. No, not—Great snakes! here 'tis!'

(Nearly all airs that blow have in turn been the theme of some sort of singer. 'Cease, rude Boreas, blustering railer,' and other nautical ditties trumpet the North wind. 'The sweet-lipped South' is sighingly sung by Keats. Shelley's deathless ode—

O wild West wind,
Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:'

comes to us like a clarion-call. 'The kisses of the soft South-West' lovingly cloy breezy verses of Bryant. And even the much-execrated East wind finds a shivery laureate in Kingsley. But who will hymn the howling ouragan, and tell whence bloweth *that* blood-freezing blast?)

A frozen air-wave suddenly swept over us, and a frozen wind-blast shrieked over the volcano mountain. Gassy threw himself flat on the ground, and I followed suit. All in a moment came a roar like the shout of a million devils. Clods of earth, splinters of rock, bits of lava, branches of trees, small stones, and many other portable articles whizzed over our prostrate bodies. Every leaf and small bough flew from the trees; and the hurtle of flying fragments whistled shrill accompaniment to thunderous roar of wind. In the thickest of that awful din, as though nature wanted to pile up agony, I felt the sharp sick shudder of an earthquake. Trees began to tumble, the ground shook and trembled, and cold perspiration burst out all over me, with a sick and faint feeling that made me long for the speedy departure of that unfriendly ouragan.

In an Eastern typhoon, Atlantic hurricane, or Mediterranean white squall—speaking from personal experience—one expects wind, and one gets it unadulterated; but this outrageous ouragan was a miscellaneous assortment of surprises.

Sheltered to some extent by dense undergrowth, we yet had to keep flat and hold on tight, or be blown on an aerial excursion somewhere out into the lake. For a quarter of an hour it was a

tight fix, weirdly musical; then the fiercely whistling wind lulled and cataracts of water descended straight from heaven, till the little stream became raging torrent and we became limp lumps of sodden humanity.

After some ten minutes of this overwhelming douche, suddenly we heard a sound of shouting, which rose above the swish and thudding of the water. Heaven's flood-gates were now being shut down, and the air was again becoming calm; so we went down the slushy slope beside the foaming, struggling, roaring river. Some little way below, in a hollow which was now a swirling lake full of tumultuous muddy waves, a man was madly struggling against the gathering waters, amongst up-rooted trees, logs of dead wood, detached branches, and sundry other dangerous débris. Again and again the man fell, and was whirled about by eddying waves, while each instant the torrent rose and swelled. A tangle of boughs now twisted round the man's body, and, clinging to it desperately, he was presently swept in towards the edge. With much difficulty, just as he was being whirled away again, we succeeded in dragging him safe to land; and there he lay helpless, glaring at us with the wild eyes of a maniac. He was a roughish-looking white man, washed and mangled and limp.

A pull from my flask acted in the way of starchy stiffening; sanity returned to his eyes, more or less—for they always looked a bit mad—and he found his tongue. It appeared, from his own rambling account, that on the other side of the dell was a cave, in which he had taken refuge. The heaving of the 'trembler,' with the crash of falling stones and forest accompaniments, frightened him into making a dash at the cavern's mouth, whence the unchained wind instantly hurled him back headlong. Bewildered by the fall, deafened by the shrieking and roaring tumult, he lay awhile almost senseless, till roused by a roaring still more frightful—the voice of a jaguar.

In Eastern jungle or on American mountain, or in any place you please, a big brute's roar, close alongside, is trying to the nerves; but in a black cavern, where you can't spot the beast's whereabouts, it becomes maddening. Try for yourself; go with a savage dog into an empty vaulted cellar, shut the door and heave a brick at the dog; then you will have an idea what a bewildering echo can do, and the effect of a mysterious horror upon nerves even of the bravest. Just try it!

Timothy Saggars—which was the half-drowned man's name

—was a brave man, as I afterwards found out, and he had strong nerves ; but the strain now put upon them was too taut. Seemingly close beside him burst out the tiger's roar, peal after peal, echoing from rock to rock, from roof to roof, bounding and rebounding from all sides at once in awful threats full of deadly terror. For a moment he strove to trace the sound, trying to spy two flaming eyes in the darkness ; but no eyes appeared, no clue to where the beast was, nor sign whence danger was to be expected. Then Timothy Saggars went mad, *pro tem.*—and no shame to him.

Headlong he dashed from the cavern, from earthquake, tiger's claws and teeth, into wind that whirled him into raging water. And that was about all the unfortunate semi-lunatic could recollect.

'The Lord made a dead set at me in that there cave,' declared Timothy, when, dryer externally and wetter within, he sat smoking in comparative comfort, 'and He blowed me into the tumultuous water,' he went on in unconsciously irreverent phrase, 'an' you was appinted for to lug me out of that there discomfortable circumstance ; an' He'll find work for me to do somewhere all on a suddent ; for He don't make no sport of a poor Christian man, nor yet He don't do no miracles jest for fun, nor nigh drown a chap for nuthin'.'

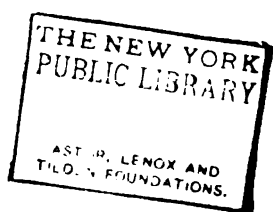
'Who the blazes are you preaching to?' asked Gassy, as Timothy's eyes happened to meet his own.

'Yes, sir,' continued our new acquaintance, unheedingly, 'there's bound to be work somewhere ; an' I'm ready, ready an' gay for to do that work when the name an' natur' of it is revealed to me. There's many as has given me their notions of the work, what it may be. Some thinks it would lay in just loafing round with a revolver. Others reckon it up as a matter of strolling on the Camine Reale of dark nights, with a sharp machete an' a chance of running agin gold-diggers from Libertad. There was a good man at Matagalpa who was kind to me, as hinted strong that the hand of Providence had marked me out speshul for horse-lifting ; an' there was a fat man at Leon as notioned I'd kinder do the Lord's work away up north, in the Chicago pig-trade. I don't see myself as it's any of them things. But there's some work somewhere, an', please God, that work I'll do !'

'Well,' said I, 'you're well out of that last little tussle, anyhow. I don't suppose you'll take to ouragan-work again, if you



"I felt all sorts of low!"



can help it. It was about the hardest bit of work you ever did, wasn't it ?'

'It was the most onpleasant sort of circumstance as the Lord ever fixed ary a human into,' asserted Timothy, with a solemn look at each of us, and then up at the sky.

'You're blooming cocksure about that Lord of yours,' said Gassy. 'I guess you don't quite know all He knows, and He saw me in a scary fix more than once. Have you ever tumbled amongst alligators, real high-class jokers ?'

'Well, sir, I've been placed to work where alligators was onpleasant plentiful ; but owing to the onkindness of Natur', which had so fixed their jaws, they was onable to laff. I've seed a many animals laff free and hearty, but them alligators hadn't ever been eddicated to no sense of humour. But, excepting of a joke, they'd catch most anything, human, Injun, nigger, or otherwise. I knowed one of 'em, an old bull, as swallowed a pair of knee-boots, a boat-hook, half a man's body, a loaded rifle, and a sack of meal. Maybe the cretur took that reparst in the light of a joke, but it didn't make him laff, nohow. No, sir, I've never knowed no high-class alligator jokers, nowhere.'

'Anyhow,' said Gassy, looking slightly surprised, 'you've seen enough to understand a fix I was in, not so many weeks ago. I was——'

'The Lord have give me an 'onderstanding,' observed Timothy, devoutly.

'I was camped with a Yankee and an Injun,' continued Gassy, 'on a river-bank in Mosquito, and I went down to bathe. The Injun came with me to wash his clothes, or do some other durned foolery. After a paddle up and down the pool, I anchored on to a rock just under the surface on t'other side. I was breathing my pipes a bit, and kinder wondering at the curious coloured leaves that overhung the pool, when I spied an alligator. He was just a-rising top of some speckled pebbles, where the water weren't more'n a foot deep. For a minute or two I watched the clumsy varmint creeping an' crawling over the stones and sand, without thinking of danger, till his fore-paws splashed into deep water down on my side. The brute slid down, noiseless and oily-like, like grease off a hot pan, straight my way. All in an instant it kinder struck me that my location was getting warm. At first I wasn't skared, only it seemed about time to make tracks. So I pushed off from

the rock and struck out for the shore, back across to where the Injun was washing, never thinking the varmint could be after *me*. But that's just what he was! And my situation was getting blooming hot, for his nose pointed right dead at me, and the beggar swam as fast as he could paddle his scaly flippers. Then I grew scared, and how I did swot! He swum, and I swum, and neither of us said nary a word. There was no time for perlitte attentions; we both wanted our breath for business.'

For a few moments Gassy paused to light his pipe, which had gone out.

'Well, boys,' he went on, 'the cussed reptile gained on me—gained on me a sight faster than I liked. He slid along the surface with just his ugly great nose and his cussed little eyes in sight, making ne'er a ripple, but only two smooth long waves that parted from his snout. So we both swum as hard as blazes in deadly silence; and I seemed to be in a dream, with the alligator behind for a scaly nightmare. And there, straight in front, squatted that fool Injun merrily washing his blooming old clothes; while the alligator wasn't a dozen feet astern, getting nigher my toes every paddle-stroke. Then I went kind o' crazy, and roared; and the alligator sank like a ghost, swift and noiseless; and that blessed Injun started to his feet. Great heavens! The reptile was sliding along out of sight, down under me! 'Twas bad enough before, when I could watch the devilish eyes slipping along closer and closer; but when they vanished, and there was no knowing where that infernal snout was—oh, Lord!—I felt all sorter nohow!'

'I reckon as how I know that there feeling jest ezzackly,' remarked Mr. Timothy Saggars, sympathetically.

'I've gone through many skeary moments,' continued Gassy, 'but never a one to equal that—never, by the Great Eternal! The scaly devil had dived right under me! I threw myself up almost straight, and screamed and roared and yelled! Thunder! Well, boys, the Injun guessed the state of my unfortunate affairs in less than half a wink; and he whipped out his knife and slipped into the water like a flash of blazing grease, quite like a sensible human. I calculate that alligator wasn't more'n half a yard astern, about a couple of feet underneath my toes, when the Injun shot down under t'other end of me, a-squinting around for earthquakes and other wildfowl. That's how he did the trick! Straight as an arrow, with scarce a bubble, he

passed under my body, and under the belly of the alligator. And then he just slit a buttonhole in that scaly-nightmare's vest, smarter than any tailor in creation could have fixed it.'

'That wer' a providential buttonhole,' muttered Timothy, 'an' it were made by the Lord,' he piously added, as he met the fierce eyes of the interrupted Gassy.

'It was a blessed lucky buttonhole for me, anyhow,' said Gassy, with a good-natured grin, 'and it let out the varmint's bad blood by the gallon. Great snakes how the cuss did bleed, and how he stunk of musk! And he played merry-moses all over the pool, till the water boiled like a blooming fish-kettle. I swam on, half-stupid, till I got to the bank, and the Injun pulled me out same as you'd yank a child out from a quicksand. Then I fell down, faint-like. Good Lord! How almighty scared I did feel!'

'It wer' a most mighty circumstance, that there alligator,' said Timothy. 'I reckon 'twere a marv'lous wopper; as tall as ever I heerd on.'

'Tall! Well, measuring that scaly wildfowl by my personal experience of him, the reptile seemed to me to be about as long as eternity and as broad as a prairie,' declared Gassy.

'Twelve foot's the longest ever I see,' said Timothy, 'without a spyglass,' he added, contemplatively; 'an' when a Christian man reckons up as he'd knowed alligators for to be sea-sarpint-like Jabberwocks and myth'logical leviathans, I allus presents that there man with half-a-dollar for to buy himself a Testament.'

Gassy looked at his new acquaintance with a dubious scowl, but Timothy Saggars' serene expression of countenance was so 'childlike and bland' that it evidently puzzled him.

'Do you mean to say that you doubt——' he began, when the mild voice of Timothy interrupted him.

'No, sir, I don't doubt nothing. I'm a believing Christian. There was a wise man as I knowed at Matagalpa, an' he taught me as how Natur' wer' wonderful curious, an' did things as I niver heerd on. They said he wer' a genus, an' he writ po'try beautiful. I rec'lect a Chris'mas carol he writ about Natur', an' I larned it orf by heart, so as to say it to ary man as misdoubted nat'ral history. I'll say it now, if so be you care to hear some cur'osities o' Natur', which you won't no more doubt than I doubt what you tells to me, if so be you're a believing Christian.'

'Fire away!' said Gassy, and Timothy spouted—

'Twas a Chris'mas night not so long ago
A bird come'd along nary man didn't know ;
An' atop o' the Jimmiwick-tree it sat,
An' builded a nest on Jimmiwick's cap.
"Ah me, deary me, and woe is me !
'Tis the Woggerly bird !" saith Jimmiwick-tree.

'In its nest the Woggerly laid a egg,
Nigh big as a Jabberwock's bald old head.
Saith the Jimmiwick-tree, "'Tis darned absurd
To be fooled by a blooming Woggerly bird !
Ah me, deary me, I'm a sight to see !
Why was I born a Jimmiwick-tree ? "

'On its egg the Woggerly sat right down
On Jimmiwick's cap, inside the crown.
"Revenge is sweet," the Jimmiwick cried,
And to stand on its head the Jimmiwick tried,
But failed ; for, you see, it hadn't been taught,
When young, to summersault as it ought.

'So the egg got hatched, and the Woggerlet use't
Atop o' the Jimmiwick's cap to roost ;
An' visiting cards. polite as could be,
It dropped on the face o' the Jimmiwick-tree,
Which cried, "My eyes ! I can't even see
Them Woggerly birds as is smothering me ! "

During the recital of this portion of the curious Christmas carol, the eyes of the narrator had been devoutly elevated toward heaven ; they now turned to Gassy. With an expression on his countenance as of one vainly trying to solve a conundrum, the latter turned his eyes towards me, while I calmly contemplated the lake—Nicaragua—which, with rolling waves glinting in sun-setting beams, stretched away to the horizon. Around us were great tree-ferns, shadowed by mighty cotton-trees enwrapped from base to crown by shrouds of Spanish moss, like long grey cloaks, swaying and shuddering in each breath of wind. And from out the moss shone dark shiny leaves of rubber-tree, lace-like plumes of bamboo, thorny fronds of palm, star-like lianas of crimson and yellow and purple, and long festoons of brilliant orchids. Weird and solemn in the still eventide was this 'ceiba-tree,' which the Indians revered as that under which the demon Atit

showed herself to their Toltec ancestors. And it was under one of these trees that we now sat, pondering over that Christmas carol according to the gospel of Timothy Saggars.

'Are there any Jimmiwick-trees on this island, Mr. Saggars?' I asked. 'I should much like to see one.'

'I ain't seen any one as yet, sir.'

'How would you know the blooming tree if you did see one?' asked Gassy, looking curiously puzzled.

'I allow as it would have the nest of the Woggerly bird 'pon its cap, sir, an' mebbe a egg or a woggerlet.'

'Then you mean to say that there really is a Woggerly bird, do you?'

'There ain't not no misdoubt in my mind regardin' the cur'osities o' Natur', sir. Some thinks different. One man at Matagalpa made sorter fun of it, and he writ a verse which he called a doxology for to stick to the tail-end of the Christmas carol, suthin like this—

'But o' course I know, same as you know too,
No Jimmiwick-tree upon earth ever grew ;
An' o' course we know 'twould be awful absurd
If there wer' such a thing as a Woggerly bird.
And if you still ask, Why shouldn't there be
A Woggerly bird and a Jimmiwick-tree ?
Or a egg as big as a Jabberwock's nut ?
I say, Ask another, I give that lot up.'

'But that there man as writ that,' added Mr. Saggars, 'wer' an unbelieving Mormonite, an' providence had afflicted him in the head. He wer' a sorter lunatic.'

'Lunatics are not such rare birds as Woggerlys, hereabouts,' remarked Gassy, with his eyes upon Timothy's face. 'Affliction of the head seems to me to be a rather common tropical complaint.'

'Well,' said I, 'you thought that chap off his head—he was an Oxford man—who sang "Lucy Neale" in that grog-shop. The first verse, if you remember, was—

'*Alabamæ natus sum ; heri nomen Beale ;
Puellem flavam habuit cui nomen erat Neale ;
Decrevit ut me venderet quod furem me putavit,
Sic fatum me miserrimum crudeliter tractavit ;
O mea dulcis Neale, carior luce Neale
Si mecum hic accumberes quam felix essem Neale.*'

'The lunatic was drunk,' declared Gassy.

'Maybe, but, as regards the Woggerly, there is said to be some huge bird hereabouts which, though rarely seen, I believe really does exist. Through the branches of a tree I caught a glimpse of an enormous bird not long ago. To me it looked much larger than a Chilian condor or any eagle. The brilliancy of the turquoise sky and thickness of the foliage prevented accurate observation, but I believe it to have been that mysterious fowl the aquilucho, so rarely seen and so fervently worshipped by Mosquito Indians. A great day is it for the Kingmen, the Ramas and Woolwas and Lapi, when one of their tribe catches sight of the aquilucho—a day of rejoicing, of drunkenness, and many legends. As the one I saw sailed away across the savannah its colour appeared a dark greyish-brown, and, barring the vast stretch of its huge wings, that is all I saw of that aquilucho—the bird of which a single feather is thought worthy of preservation in our museums.'

'I guess it's just a blooming superstition,' remarked Gassy, 'though Nature sometimes does turn out remarkable woppers. When I was second lieutenant aboard the frigate *Seaflower*, cruising off the coast of Africa, some twenty years ago, I went in for a lonely shooting expedition and got introduced to a giant rhinoceros. I'd just selected a stuggy tree with big limbs for a roosting-place, by the side of a lake, as the sun was setting, when along came Mr. Rhino. He looked at me and seemed struck all of a heap, and I skedaddled up the tree. Then he blew a trumpeting sort of how-d'ye-do, and came and took stock of me in quite a friendly manner, as if he wanted to shake hands. So I got down and gave the beggar a biscuit, which pleased him mightily, and he rubbed his nose against my hand and grunted "thankee." I could see he liked the sound of my voice, so I took out my pocket "Pickwick" and read him a chapter. He didn't laugh, but the polite attention with which he listened was gratifying, and, when I ended, Mr. Rhino grunted several rounds of applause. It had taken his fancy, evidently, for when I went up to roost the brute kept me awake by whistling, same as theatre gods do when they want more "moosic."

'Do you think, sir, the beast knowed English?' inquired Timothy, in a tone of intense interest.

'How the dickens should I know?' snapped Gassy. 'Well, in the morning, while I was drinking my coffee, I saw his head coming along on the lake, like a small boat with one mast and no sail. Then he waddled up the bank, seemingly in pain, and

I went down to meet him. Looking as pleased as if he'd found a fortune the clumsy beast tried to gambol, like a billiard-table trying to waltz. Presently, coming to a full-stop, he turned his head towards his right flank; then his eyes sought mine. Kneeling down, I found that the horn of another rhino had been driven into my friend and broken off. I got hold of it and pulled, and poor Mr. Rhino roared; his huge frame trembled, and tears rolled from his eyes. But it came out at last, and, with a scream of agony, Rhino rolled over on his side. Seeing him fall, a hungry crocodile crawled from the lake for breakfast. Up jumped Rhino, opened out the saurian's interior economy, stamped the reptile into shapelessness, blew a blast of victory, and then came and licked my hand with a blooming rough tongue. Then he went for the extracted horn, which he furiously stamped into the ground.

'The Lord had planted in him a beautiful instink,' remarked Mr. Sagers, 'an' it telled him as how you was a friend in need.'

'And the Lord planted t'other rhino's horn in him to bring out the beautiful instinct, eh? Well, anyhow, Mr. Rhino repaid the compliment to me. In the night he woke me by trumpeting, and, by the light of the moon, I saw that his head was turned upward towards the next tree to mine. Mr. Rhino was gazing at a panther—a long, gaunt, starved beast—just meditating a spring. Its eyes, restless and fiery, glanced from one of my shoulders to the other unceasingly. It would have been a tremendous leap, but, starving as he was, the panther would undoubtedly have risked it but for Mr. Rhino. That gentleman's three-foot horn, uplifted straight below, made failure certain death. A minute later, with a dull "thud," the panther bumped down upon the ground with a bullet in his brain. Rhino blew "halleluiahs," gave me a satisfied glance, placed his horn beneath the centre of the dead body, and sent the defunct panther flying towards the stars. Cunningly Mr. Rhino eyed the ascension, and, when the carcase poised at its highest elevation, forth came a blast of warning and defiance to all panthers. Then he waited for the descent, and sent the body up again sky-high. How many times the defunct got elevated I don't know. It went on till breakfast-time, and continued during the repast, till the body became a shapeless bag of bones and was stamped into the ground.'

'Are panthers plenty in them furrin parts?' asked Timothy.

'Rather, you bet!' responded Gassy. 'The blooming lot that came to that defunct beggar's funeral would have made you say all the prayers you ever learnt. I was kneeling alongside friend Rhino, dressing his wound, when I heard them coming. There was a hissing sort of sound, like the soft E flat of a siffleur, which told me panthers weren't far off. Next minute I saw two trailing along the ground about twenty yards straight astern of Rhino, with their eyes fixed on *me*. I fancy they mistook Mr. Rhino's rump for a natural feature of the landscape. Without rising, I picked up my rifle, plugged the leading panther between the eyes, and, as the other turned his head, plugged him in the ear-hole; and the beggars clutched each other, kicked, and fought, till Rhino sent the pair skywards, and then flattened them out into furry pancakes. Those were the leading mourners; though, but for friend Rhino, I should probably have missed the rest of the funeral procession altogether. And it was well worth seeing.'

'That there remark o' yourn, sir, a bit back,' said Timothy, 'wer' a observation most truthful.'

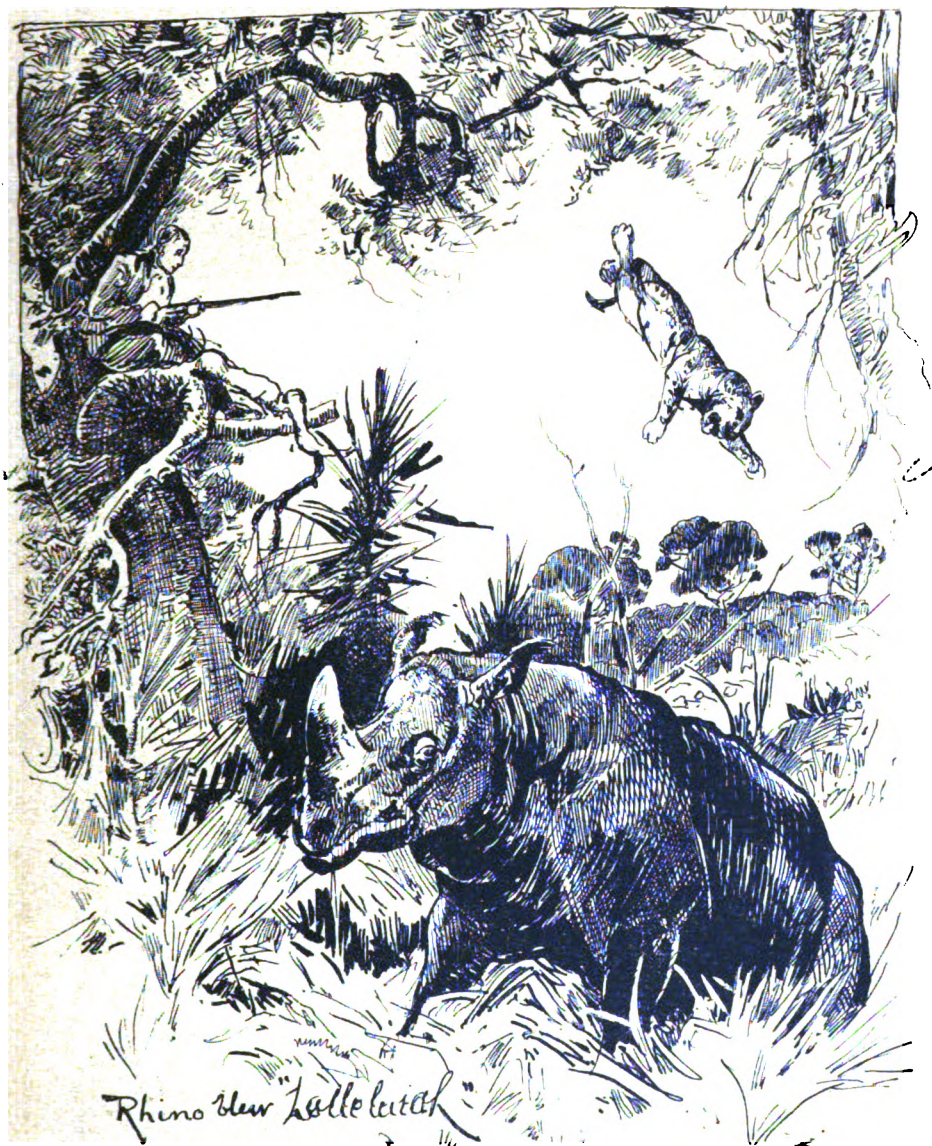
'Which remark? What d'ye mean? D'you think anything that I say is *not* truthful?' queried Gassy, sharply.

'You said, sir, that "Natur" does sometimes turn out most remarkable woppers;" an' if that there Rhino ain't a remarkable wopper I never heerd nary human tell truth.'

'He *was* a wopper,' growled Gassy; 'I took his measure with a tape. He stood seven feet nine inches at the shoulder, and weighed about as much as a full-sized steam-engine. As for intelligence, I guess he was tip-top of the rhinoceros-major class. He seemed to understand everything.'

'He wer' a great cur'osity o' Natur' I don't misdoubt, an' your nat'ral hist'ry is truly interestin', sir.'

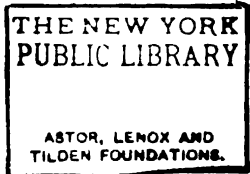
'That's all right. Well, friend Rhino grunted in a way which told me he wanted my attention to some particular business. Then he waddled towards the lake, looking round at me as if to say, "Come along, old man;" so I went along, and, after going some two hundred yards, heard shrill cries—the death-squeals of a juvenile hippo. Five panthers were feasting on him, tearing at the reeking flesh, so intent upon the gory banquet that they neither heard nor saw us. The lumps of steaming fat they tore away, and half choked themselves with, were astonishing; and the beasts' growls and snarls deadened



Rhino blew "Lalle litch"

John Beer

see page 181.



all surrounding sounds. Mr. Rhino forgot his manners and did not wait for me. He trotted gaily up to the nearest beast and sent his horn clean thro' him. Neither of the other four took the slightest notice, and Rhino enjoyed himself amazingly. Having sent number one flying, he hooked up the next from off the carcase, struggling, clawing, and shrieking, and sent him to catch number one up aloft. All five went up in turn, and in turn each one was "pancaked." Having finished his acrobatic performance, Rhino stood listening, carefully taking observations of the surrounding scenery. Then he pointed his head steadily at a tree, and gave a sharp trumpet-blast. Two panthers were crouching up aloft, eyeing the hippo-hash. After potting, elevating, and pancaking the pair, Rhino and I took a stroll. I had half a mind to get on my friend's back, but——'

'You might have tumbled off,' remarked Mr. Saggars sagely, 'and you might ha' got hurted.'

'Just so, my wise friend, which was the reason I remained upon the ground. There had evidently been a famine amongst the panthers, and an invading host had come to feast upon the fat young hippos, of whom Mr. Rhino was apparently the self-appointed guardian. A couple of these juicy juveniles, all fat and legs, toddled out from the covert on our right; and a panther's head popped from behind a tree, watching them. Another panther's head followed suit from another tree. The twin hippos, like two Dutch cheeses, started a romping match; and the two panthers immediately made a flank movement to cut the unsuspecting hippos off from the water. Just as the panthers were about to spring, I plugged them, and Rhino performed their funeral obsequies. The young hippos stood trembling, squeaking shrill cries for their mother, till an elevated panther flopped down between them. Then they shuffled to the bank, bundled themselves into the lake, and hastily retired down below.'

'Did you happen to see their mother, sir?' inquired Timothy. 'Mebbe they was orphans.'

'She was at home doing the washing,' snarled Gassy, with a scowl at the querist. Then he continued his sportive history. 'Half-a-mile's slow march brought us within hearing of sounds of warfare, and presently we saw two alligators and four panthers hard at it over a panther-carcase. The panthers wished to retain their dead brother in the bosoms of his family.

The saurians insisted upon burying him in strange soil. It was a noisily hot dispute. Already one alligator had a broken leg, the other a ripped-open flank ; while three of the panthers were considerably dilapidated. Just as one saurian was closing his jaw on a panther, the other saurian accidentally swept the panther out of the said jaws and his own tail into them. Down snapped the jaw, the tail was curtailed, and yells from the now tailless saurian proclaimed his tale of woe. In a couple of minutes his undefended rear was torn to pieces, and he was *hors de combat*. Now, it was four to one ; till the 'one' got a panther between his jaws, and the three remaining beasts got the reptile by the throat. The latter's mouth being full and his tail useless, he was quickly settled ; and the panthers were quickly settled by Mr. Rhino, in artistic acrobatic fashion. Thinking sixteen panthers and a couple of saurians a sufficient bag for one day, I invited my friend Rhino to come home to dinner. But that sportive gentleman wanted more exercise to give him an appetite, so he led me to where we had left the five dead panthers. They had been carried off by alligators. The hippo carcase had also disappeared. In revenge, three starving panthers had bagged a young alligator, and were busily having dinner when we arrived. The trio were added to our bag, making twenty-one head. Then we went back for our own dinner, and found two panthers up in my bedroom. I didn't wish my house pulled down before my lease expired, so I had to shoot the pair. If I hadn't, my horned friend would have had the tree up by the roots. After a brief feed we each had a snooze, I up on my bed-branch, Mr. Rhino down in the shallow water under shady trees. Then Rhino routed me out again, and we slaughtered eight more panthers. Had not the sun gone down we might have established a record. But two saurians and twenty-seven panthers made a heavy-enough bag, and a day's total that one need not be ashamed of, falling as the whole lot did to one muzzle-loading rifle and one muzzle-loaded rhino-horn.'

'The cur'osities o' Natur' in furrin parts is mighty wonderous!' murmured Mr. Saggars, sleepily.

And now the sun had set. And while, one by one, the crater-crests above us blazed out in flame-like colour, we walked in silent single-file beneath the shadowy trees back to the Indian village. Sunset's afterglow died ; fireflies, flashed sparkling from out darkness ; the mountain, shrouded in purple

robes, slept in majestic peace; heaven's star-spangled cloak covered dusky natives and white visitors, and——

While flowers exhale night's dewy-sweet perfumes—
While bats flit squeaking mammiferian tunes,
And many a nose trombone-like-snoring booms;
Within each palm-thatched village hut is rife
(Sine-quâ-non of tropic Indian life)
The sanguinary insectivorous band
That taps at night each body, face, and hand,
And by each body, when it wakes, is Damned.

ONE OF THE BEST.

By 'RELLIM.'

RETURNING to chambers one afternoon, I spotted a face in the surging crowd that swept along the Strand which seemed familiar.

A second glance verified the impression: it was that of my old schoolmate and fellow-student at 'Bart's,' Harold Farquhar, of whom I had lost sight for some months.

He did not see me, and was hurrying along with down-cast eyes, like a man who wants neither to recognise nor be recognised. His attire, which was none of the sprucest, might account for the unwonted modesty of deportment; but scarcely, I thought, for Farquhar was not given to be bashful on the score of his clothes, however much at variance with the prevailing mode they might be.

I hastened after him, for by this time he had passed and was vanishing in the distance, and slapped him on the shoulder. He started as if I had touched an exposed nerve with the forceps, just glanced at me, and darted across the street as though bent on adding one more to the lengthy list of victims of the deadly hansom. More than one cabby pulled his horse on to its haunches and animadverted strongly and fluently upon my friend's rash proceeding; but he eventually reached the other side of the street in safety, and steadily pursued his way.

Wondering somewhat, but not to be outdone, I rapidly followed, and, coming up with the chase outside the Gaiety-bar, grasped him firmly by the arm.

'Now, old man, what have I done, that you fly off at a tangent in this unseemly manner?' I asked.

'Hullo, it's you, is it? I mistook you for another of those beastly importunates to whom I owe money. That beard has altered your face rather, and I may say, parenthetically, not for the better. I only arrived in England this morning and have bumped against four creditors already. I'm glad you're not a fifth. Come and have a whisky.'

'So you have been abroad?' I inquired, as we wended our way to the buffet.'

'Yes, to Australia. I didn't see much of the country, though. It was this way: The doctor of one of the Oriental liners was taken suddenly ill at the last minute; they hadn't another man handy at the moment, and my cousin who is a big pot in the shipping line, got me the berth. I've been away just three months, and a jolly good time I had; why, the freedom from duns in itself proved a most effective tonic.'

'And I suppose you've netted something in the way of salary?'

'Well, the salary is not much, and I'm afraid my wine list will materially reduce the amount standing to my credit when the ship pays off. But, I say, old chap, in confidence, I've got engaged to the dearest little girl in the world. She was one of our passengers on the trip home, an heiress too—her father owns a station with an unpronounceable name in New South Wales, which, I'm told, is as large as three or four English counties rolled into one.'

'And is papa ready to say, "Bless you, my children?"'

'H'm, I can't say that he is, in fact he doesn't know anything about it, as yet. He spent most of his time in the smoking-room playing whist with some other old squatters, and so inadvertently gave me opportunities with Edith—delightful girl, you'll say so when you see her—of which I made the most.'

'Well,' I said, 'as a stern moralist, I can't altogether approve of your proceedings, but I heartily wish you luck all the same; and now come down to my chambers and brush up a bit, and we'll go and have some dinner.'

Farquhar assented readily enough, and on the way discoursed freely in his impulsive fashion upon the state of his feelings and his finances.

These latter, it appeared were not so very desperate. A hundred or two would pretty well clear him; but to a man with

nothing but youth, a charming manner, and a professional reputation yet to be made, who was, moreover, anxious to pose gracefully before a wealthy prospective father-in-law, the situation was sufficiently embarrassing.

'I wish I had some "ready" I could lend you, old man,' I said; and I really meant it, for I had a great regard for Harold Farquhar. He had been my chum at school, and his people were very kind to me in the days of their prosperity.

When the crash came, and Farquhar père died, ruined, and broken-hearted, his son buckled manfully to work, instead of crying over spilt milk, and, if he possessed somehow a perfect genius for letting money slip through his fingers without adequate or visible return, he was yet capable of keeping a stiff upper lip when pinched, and of refraining from sponging upon the slender income of his widowed mother.

'I know you would help me if you could, old fellow,' he answered cheerily, 'but a man should stand or fall by his own unaided efforts, and, besides, I take it you literary swells have all your work cut out to fend for yourselves. I'm sorry to see some of your work is still of the boomerang order,' and he pointed significantly to half-a-dozen bulky envelopes addressed to me, which lay on the table.

'Why don't you give the other kind of bookmaking a trial? It seems to pay its professors better than this, anyhow, and that reminds me——'

'Of what?' I asked, as he broke off abruptly.

'Well, it reminds me of something I was willing to forget for the moment. My principal creditor is a bookmaker with whom I used to have little flutters occasionally, when I had any chips.'

'And is he such a severe creditor, then?'

'No, I don't know that he is. He's a very good sort, and I think rather likes me, but he likes his money better. The last time I saw him—to speak to, that is—it cost me a sovereign to disguise how hard up I really was.'

'How was that?'

'It was just before the Lincoln Handicap; I went into the billiard-room at old Cleveland's place—a part of the house I seldom visited, and he came in, full of a sweep he was getting up on the race.

'Five hundred subscribers at a sovereign a time, there were to be, and the amount, less five per cent., to be divided among

the drawers of the first three horses in the usual proportions of three-eighths, two-eighths, and one-eighth. There were a lot of men playing pool and looking on, and most of them went in for it.'

'I don't much favour sweeps myself, even when, as this was, they're perfectly fair and above-board. The odds are too great, and I prefer to have some choice in the selection of my little investments, so I was about to decline, when it occurred to me that if I did so Cleveland might think a sovereign was an object with me—as it actually was—and begin to worry about the thirty or forty pounds I owed him for dinners and horse-hire. I accordingly told him to put my name down, and tossed him over one of the few remaining sovereigns I had, with as easy an air as I could assume.'

'And you drew a blank, I suppose?'

'I might just as well have done so, I drew some colt or another, by Aluminium, I think, but the brute didn't start, and of course the drawer of a horse doesn't scoop in a hundred or so as is the case in the gigantic sweeps engineered by Tattersalls in the Colonies. I saw the result of the race in an evening paper, just as we were going out of dock and remember it well. Gunmetal won, Snapshot was second, and Brassfinisher third.'

'How could you have been so foolish as to get so deeply into this Mr. Cleveland's debt?' I asked, as we strolled towards the Criterion.

'Because he gave me credit,' said Farquhar, simply. 'He took a fancy to me because I could ride, I think, and he used to proffer me a mount whenever I had a day to spare, telling me ready money did not matter, I could pay when I liked. As you know I am fond of horses, and I never had to consider the question of expense in the old days.'

'Cleveland won't press you,' I said; 'call on him and tell him you'll settle as soon as you can. Do you owe him anything over racing?'

'No. Lancashire law, money to money was the strict rule where betting was concerned, and I dare say Cleveland wouldn't make a fuss over the other affair, only he may have been hard hit himself—these racing men often are. Anyhow, he has called often on Tomlinson, who shares my rooms, and inquired particularly for my address. Tommy, like a good boy, wouldn't enlighten him, but nearly every letter—and he wrote to each

port we touched at—made mention of a visit from my pertinacious creditor. I wish to goodness I could pay; it's so deucedly unpleasant to go about in fear of your fellow-man. Only this morning I caught sight of Cleveland coming towards me; luckily he was some little distance away, and I doubled down a side street and ran up the first staircase I saw.'

Farquhar had a great deal of interest to tell me, and our dinner was somewhat protracted in consequence; indeed, several people came in, sat down near us, dined and left before we were ready for cheese.

We reached that penultimate gastronomic stage at length, and I was listening to a humorous recital of some incidents of life on board an ocean liner, on the part of my companion, when he suddenly stopped short in the middle of his narrative, and, looking up to see what was the matter, I was surprised at the flush of colour that spread over his face, and the embarrassed look in his eyes.

Before I had time to ask a question a loud voice behind me called out, 'Ah, Mr. Farquhar, so I have run you to earth at last. I've been looking everywhere for you for the last two or three months.'

'Good evening, Cleveland. How are you? I'm pleased to see you'—but poor Farquhar's look belied his words.

I thought conciliation the best policy under the circumstances, and invited Mr. Cleveland to sit down and take a glass of wine, which he did.

'Well, Mr. Farquhar, where have you been this long time? I've searched for you high and low.'

'So sorry,' murmured Farquhar; 'fact is I've been abroad—Australia. Only returned to London this morning.'

'I wonder you did not find time to call on me at once?'

'I should have done so in a day or two; been very busy, had to look about me, you know.'

'Of course, of course,' said Cleveland; 'but now, as I've found you so unexpectedly, suppose we settle our little account off the reel, eh?'

'I'm very sorry, very sorry indeed, Mr. Cleveland, but to be frank I'm rather hard pushed just now. I'll pay you as soon as I possibly can; in fact, my friend and I were discussing ways and means as you came in.'

'Well, that is a good one,' said Cleveland, with a jovial laugh. 'Here have I been going about with a cheque for 255*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*

in your favour for three months and more, and you talk of being hard up. Pay me, indeed! why I've paid myself that 41*l.* you owed me, long ago. Ha! ha!

'I—I don't understand.'

'Why, have you forgotten about that sweep on the Lincoln Handicap at my place. You drew the winner.'

'But I thought Gunmetal won?'

'So he did win, and here's the cheque for first prize, less commission and my little account. Some people take a deal of pressing before they'll accept money, eh, sir?'—turning to me.

'And how has the misunderstanding arisen?' I inquired. 'I understood that my friend drew a horse named Aluminium, that did not run.'

'Not at all, sir. It was this way. In the sporting paper from which we took the names of the horses when we were making out the list, the printer had omitted the name, and instead of describing him as Mr. Parsons' black colt Gunmetal by Aluminium—Camp-follower, he made it read 'Colt Aluminium—Camp-follower. As the horse was an outsider, we none of us noticed the error and put him on the list as Aluminium for short, but when he won, of course, we found out that Mr. Farquhar here was the lucky man.'

'Waiter,' cried Farquhar, 'a bottle of champagne. Yes, a large bottle.'

Needless to say, we spent a very pleasant evening; Cleveland proved, as Farquhar put it, 'one of the best.' He told us that he had received his first start in life from my friend's late father, and for that reason would always have stood by the son to his last shilling. His parting injunction to us both as we left him was to back Cassandra for the City and Suburban. The mare belonged to a friend and racing partner of his, he said, and he enjoined the strictest secrecy, as she was sure to win.

She did, and my fortunate friend netted over two thousand pounds, with which sum he established himself as a doctor in Sydney. He is at this moment one of the leading physicians in Australia, and his charming wife is one of the queens of Colonial society.

THE ONE-HORNED STAG.

By 'SNAFFLE.'

Author of *The Snaffle Papers*, &c.

BEFORE commencing my 'over true tale,' I think it may be well that I should attempt to bring before the reader's eye some sort of picture of my little Highland shoot, Kinstrathbeg. I am afraid I sometimes—but this is not till a late hour of the evening—speak of it as 'my deer forest.' How far this appellation is suitable to the place the following story will perhaps show.

Kinstrathbeg, as its Gaelic name literally imports, lies at the head of a big valley; and in such a position my shooting lodge—a real lodge, mind, one living and four bedrooms, not one of your modern palaces with a billiard room, riding school, covered lawn-tennis court, &c.—long and low, and built of the local grey granite, stands. It is built on a spur of one of the mountains which close in the valley to the north, and the purling stream, that lulls us to sleep there, soon begins to flow dully and sluggishly through the vast expanse of heather-clad flat that forms the bottom of the big *strath*, or valley.

This *strath* is divided into three shootings, all good grouse shootings. Mine, the upper, is the smaller, but then I have the advantage of some 10,000 acres (reputed) of the mountains behind, and opposite to, the lodge; and by my agreement these hills are cleared of sheep from July to November, *exclusive*. What a funny world this is! I wonder if the agents who let Kinstrathbeg really imagine I took the hill-ground to be much over seven thousand acres because they call it ten; or that I was for a moment deluded into expecting it to be cleared of sheep for more than three months in the year! However, the tricks of Highland shooting agents are beyond the scope of my story to-day, or, perhaps, I could a tale—or two—unfold that would astonish the weak nerves of some of my readers. This hill-ground, at all events, was good enough to yield me five or six stags—it has been nine—during the three months it was so cleared; and my keeper, old Donald, generally collected as many hinds during the winter. Indeed, if I was very bored in town I sometimes ran up to help in this last proceeding. We are, I am glad to say, not cursed with deer fences in the big

valley ; and as the hills on each side of the lower part belong to good forests, there is always a fair interchange of deer. Still, my shoot lies, if I must own it, in the north-east of the Highlands, and heads are anything but good, or stags heavy.

Now the reader knows, as well as I can tell him, what right I have—late in the evening—to speak of the place as ‘my deer forest.’ He knows, too, especially if he knows the Highlands at all, what sort of a prospect he would have before him when he threw up his window on an August morning, and heard, with anticipatory delight, the crow of an old cock grouse on an adjoining knoll, for half a mile round the lodge is sanctuary, as it always should be, for beasts and birds. This being so, I may fairly consider the ground clear, and get on to the animal which gives my yarn its title.

I have said that in Strathbeg deer ran small, and heads poor, but the one-horned stag was an exception. He weighed just under twenty stone, clean, the day he entered my deer larder ; and he carried brow, bay, tray, and four on top of his single horn, as you may see in my hall to-day. On the right side he never had a vestige of antler, not even the pedicle of bone on which it should rest. His skull was, as you may see again, perfectly smooth, like a hind’s, on that side. Moreover, from crown to tip his one horn well exceeds a yard in length, no bad measurement for a Highland stag. I took him over with the place, I may say ; at least, Donald told me of him when I first went to look at Kinstrathbeg, and for three seasons that deer made my life a burden to me. It was not that I didn’t see him—I saw him half-a-dozen times every year—but that I never could get a chance of a stalk. Nobody ever thought of going after deer in the flat at the bottom, for the obvious reason that this consisted literally of three adjoining grouse-shootings ; and the almost daily popping of ‘scatter-guns’ was well calculated to keep the deer up on the hill.

Now in some way—and the ways of animals are past finding out—the one-horned stag had learned this ; and also mastered the fact that the bang-banging of the guns on the flat meant no harm to him or his kind ; and, for some seasons before I came to the place, he had made it his practice, for all the time the sheep were absent from the hills, to absent himself also, and live entirely on the flat, sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, but mostly on my shoot. As the season advanced he collected some hinds there too (at night, I suppose),

but as regularly as the 'ma-ah—ma-ah' of the black-faced sheep resounded on the hills, there was the one-horned stag, 'ahlways atween my legs in the hind-shooting!' quoth Donald.

When we (I or my neighbours) were grouse-shooting on the flat we were sure every now and then to come on him. He would rise up out of the heather, or, later in the season, out of his wallow in a moss-hag, survey us leisurely, and trot off up or down the valley as the case might be. My first season I did make a few endeavours to stalk him, but though he was easy enough to find, even sometimes from the lodge itself, there was absolutely no ground to cover one; and the animal, who was so careless of the approach of a line of guns, with dogs and keepers, seem to instinctively fear the two creeping forms almost hidden in the heather. Once I thought I had made sure of him by a long flat crawl up the dirtiest peat-moss drain I have never negotiated. The stag was lying a few yards on my side of the march-stone; and I was just going to signal to Donald to uncage the rifle when 'bang! bang!' went a couple of shots close to us. Up jumped the stag, more nimbly than usual (I dare say a pellet or two tickled him up), galloped a few yards, and pulled up, broadside on, *with the great white-washed boundary-stone fairly between him and me.* For a minute or two he stood so; and then turning round he trotted off across my neighbour's moor.

There was nothing to be done but to get up out of our dirty lying-place, and greet the grouse-shooters, who proved to be my neighbour, Archie Hammerless, and a couple of his friends, who had come down to begin work at the boundary in order to give their dogs the wind. After a hearty laugh at our filthy appearance they questioned us as to its cause, and when this was explained, Archie said:

'Surely the old devil stood long enough looking at us for you to get a shot!'

'Yes, he did,' I admitted, 'but he was safe enough from me *on your side of the march.*'

'Man alive, don't stand on such ceremony with me. But there, after all, it's no use. You'll take nothing by trying to stalk the one-horned stag.'

* * * * *

This was in my second season at Kinstrathbeg. In the next it was worse. I tried every legitimate dodge. Did I let my guests do the grouse-shooting and walk with them carrying

a rifle, not a sign of deer would we see ; and I am too fond of shooting to stand out often. I might, to be sure, have had the rifle carried by a man, but, as the reader may have guessed, my Highland establishment is but a moderate one. Donald and his assistant have quite enough to do (and carry) on shooting days ; and the third man—only employed in the shooting season—could not be spared from his mid-day duty of bringing out the pony with his paniers filled with lunch on the outward, and (more or less) with game on the homeward journey. So the old stag bothered us as usual that autumn. I think the climax was reached on the day Hammerless and I had an annual end-of-the-season grouse-drive, which we always work with a line of butts on the march, driving alternately from his ground and then from mine, or *vice versa*. Just before the end of the first drive, as the beaters had almost got too near for safe shooting, up gets the old stag, not seventy yards from the butts, out of the water-hole he had been cooling himself in during the whole of the firing, and trots off between Locke's butt and mine. Never did I feel more tempted than then to do what I had often threatened to do, put a charge of No. 5 into him ; and greater than ever was my inclination to run up during the winter, and slay the tantalising animal illegitimately during the hind-shooting. But I resisted manfully.

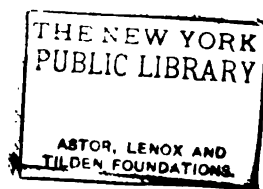
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Last season I was unexpectedly detained in England later than usual ; and it was not till the last week in August that I reached Kinstrathbeg, in company with my old friends and erst-while comrades in arms, Major Locke and Captain Barrell. Both, I may add, knew my little shoot well ; and rarely, unless from some unforeseen accident, failed to pay it an annual visit during my tenancy. The first week of our Highland trip passed without incident. The birds, in spite of our late beginning, lay well to the dogs, as I may remark, they almost always do on Kinstrathbeg, especially in fine warm weather, such as we were having. What is more, they were plentiful and well-grown, without a sign of the disease which had visited us the previous year. In the last days of August, Donald reported the stags with their velvet 'in streeps ;' and Barrell, who was very keen (whilst Locke is no rifle-shot), had a day on the hill, and got a nice ten-pointer. Of the one-horned stag we saw nothing ; and somebody surmised that he had not come through the hard winter.



Black as Erebus

Lionel Edwards. 1901



'Oh, ay!' said Donald, 'I saw him the day before the shentleman came up.'

A day or two after this, Barrell saw him again, on Hammerless' moor, when he was shooting with him.

So September rolled on. Barrell had several more successful stalks, for I did not seem to care about the hill, although previously I had always taken much more interest in the rifle than the gun. But this year I stuck to the grouse.

The last weeks of the month were wet and stormy, and the birds could no longer be expected to lie to the dogs, so it was rather an idle time with us at Kinstrathbeg. We had a day or two at the ptarmigan and blue hares on the highest ground; and beat the patches of birch-wood for roe and black-game. Hammerless and I were corresponding about fixing the day for our annual joint drive, before referred to.

The first of October, however, turned out so fine and warm that the dogs were ordered out again; and we all turned out for what might be the last walk of the season in the *strath*.

We had not been shooting very long, with very moderate results—for, fine as was the day, it is rather too much to expect grouse to lie to dogs in October—when we reached a particularly boggy bit of the valley, an almost certain find for snipe, and proceeded to walk it as best we could. Before we were half across it, there was a loud splashing; and a stag, black as Erebus from the peat, got up, and trotted away. It was the one-horned stag.

Barrell and Locke stood gazing at him, and Donald hurled a Gaelic malediction after him, as having gained a distance of some eighty or ninety yards, he coolly paused to stretch his limbs.

Just then a louder report than that of the smokeless powder, with which we had all been shooting, echoed down the valley. The one-horned stag dashed off with the short, quick gallop of an animal shot through the heart; but soon rolled over, and lay motionless in the heather.

* * * * *

How was it done? Why, very simply. The experience of previous years had shown me that the animal, certain of immunity, occasionally gave chances to grouse-shooters on the flat. All I had to do was to be prepared for those chances. For this reason I had provided myself with one of the well-known ball-and-shot guns built by Messrs. — (what a chance

for a gratuitous advertisement, but I refrain, and refer the reader to the advertisement pages of this magazine), and used it all the season. Consequently, when the stag at last appeared, whilst my two friends were staring at him, I was changing my cartridges for the two loaded with ball, I had all along carried in my waistcoat pocket; and was ready for the stag when he stopped.

All the same, I cannot help feeling a twinge of conscience in the matter; but Donald, I am glad to say, has none, and once or twice this season when we have disturbed deer during other shooting, the old man has said with a chuckle:—

‘Eh! sir! but ye were ower mony for the ane-horn’d staig.’

A WESTERN AFFAIR OF HONOUR.

By ‘UNICORN.’

WHILE spending my last visit with my old friend Major Markham, at Fort Wallace in West Kansas (since gone over to the great silent majority, gentleman and sportsman that he was), he gave me a hint to draw out his henchman, Ike Kampsus, as to the great duel at Wolfville, and I knew a good story was due at our first camp-fire.

Ike was a grizzled old cattleman and hunter, an Argonaut of '49 after Bret Harte's mould, who had made his pile, fooled it away, and gone back to the plains because 'town smowered' him. He and I were great friends, ever since our first antelope stalk, when, *mirabile dictu*, I dropped an antelope, the only one we saw, at close on 550 yards. The Major, myself, Ike, and a Southern friend were out in a prairie schooner, quail-shooting, Ike being general factotum, and at our first stopping ground, when the meal over, we lay down by the fire unmindful of the prowling coyote, in that soft dreamy hush, when on the plains 'Night lets her sable curtain down, and pins it with a star;' then I turned to Ike and said, 'Ike, old man, tell me about that Wolfville duel the Major alluded to the other day.'

The old hunter looked at me reproachfully, and said:—Ah! So yer onto that at last, boss! Well, it was jest this way! It was in '56, and blazin' hot, business was lyin' prone an'

dead—jest blistered ter death, and a lot of us was sorter pervadin' round the dance hall, it being the biggest and coolest store in camp. A monte game was a-strugglin' fer a fitful life in one corner; but most of us was jest settin' around loose, athinkin', all mighty mum an' still, 'cause it was so blame hot. Jess then a man goes up the street on a hoss, a whoopin' an' yellin', and whirlin' the loop of his rope, an' 'llowin' generally he's havin' an all-fired good time.

'Who's this yere toomultuous man on the hoss?' says one; and Dan Boggs, he answers, 'I met him up the street an' he 'lows he's called the "Man from Red Dog." He says as how he jest took a day off to visit us, an' aims to lay waste the camp some, afore he goes back!'

Jest then in his nibs stalks, into the dance hall, and hangs out his bluff with a yell of: 'Promenade to the bar! I'm a coyote an' it's my night to howl! Don't rouse me, bar-keep, with a sight of one bottle, set 'em all out. I'm fastidious about my nose-paint an' want a chance to select.'

Well, we all takes our inspiration in under our belts, and the Red Dog man tucked his away, an' turns to Dan Boggs: 'I take it you're the he-coon and boss beetler of this yer outfit,' says he.

'Well!' laughs Dan, 'if I ain't it's plenty safe as a play to let yer wisdom flow this a-way, till the he-coon gets yere. So set in yer oratorical stack for the bridle's clean off the game.'

'If there onything I turns from sick,' said the Red Dog man, 'it's vilince and devastation; but I hear such complaints constant, of this yere camp, that I takes my first afternoon off, an' rides over to line things up a bit. Now here I be, an' while I regrets it, I states it, I find you a lawless, onregenerate lot, a heap worse than roomer. I now takes the notion, fur I sees no other trail, that in half an hour I climbs into my saddle, throws my rope around this yere den of sin called Wolfville, an' removes it from the map.'

'Of course,' said Boggs, 'you don't anticipate no trouble in carryin' out these schemes?'

'None whatever,' says the Red Dog man. 'In thirty minutes I distributes this yere hamlet round the landscape, and this feat becomin' hist'ry, I canters back to Red Dog!'

About then, Cherokee Hall, who was lookin' on, shoulders his way in between Boggs and the Red Dog man mighty positive. Cherokee was a thin, nervous, gray-eyed man, sot

in his idees, an' I sees right off as he'd taken a notion agin that Red Dog man.

'Well, as you've got a heap of work struck out,' says he, 'suppose we tips the canteen agin.'

'And that ornery Red Dog man replies: 'I shorely goes you! I drinks with friend an' I drinks with foe, just alike; the pard of my bozzom an' the shudderin' victim of my 'rath, all similar!'

So Cherokee turns out a big drink an' hold it in his hand, an' I wants to say right yere that this Cherokee was the guile-fulest and coolest sport as ever cut a deck o' cards, or backed his play with a gun.

'You was a namin' some public improvements you aim to make,' says Cherokee quietly, 'such as movin' this yere camp round a lot! Now I've been figurin' on you, an' I gives you the result in strict confidence without holding out a kyard! When you talks of tearin' up Wolfville, you're a liar an' a hoss-thief, an' a cross-bred cur as 'll tear up nuthin'.'

'What's this yere I hears?' yelled the frenzied Red Dog man, reaching for his gun like a flash.

But he never got it, for Cherokee gives him that big glass of whiskey right in the eyes, and the next minute he was anguished and blind as a mole. 'I'll jest trim this yere human cyclone up a whole lot,' he laughs, a dashing his victim face downwards on the floor while a nine-inch bowie shines in his hand like the sting of an angry wasp. 'Blamed if I can do it to a blind an' helpless man; but I'll shorely fix him so as 'll get no job clerkin' in a store.' An' grabbin' the Red Dog man's hair, which was long as the mane of a hoss, he slashes it off, saying, 'There a fringe for yer new leggings, Nellie,' throwing the crop to Faro-bank Nell, and then he continues: 'Now Doc, take this yere kyute to the Early Bird saloon an' fix his peepers. In twenty minutes they'll be O K, an' tell him if he wants my gore in this to take his Winchester an' go north in the middle of the street, an' I'll come outen yere a-looking for him. Be sure an' pint him right, fair an' square, for I ain't aiming to play nuthin' low on this yere man, an' I gives him a chance for his ante' (*i.e.*, first stake in the game at poker).

So Doc Peets sorter accoomoolates the Red Dog man together, who is cussin' an' carryin' on scandalus, an' totes him away, an' right away word come to Cherokee that he was comin' round, that he war a-mixin' war medicine, an' a growing more

hostile constant, an' that Cherokee had better heel himself. So Cherokee, ca'm an' grim, sends for Jack Booth's Winchester, an eight square, latest model.

'Oh, Cher!' says Faro Nell, crying, an' tyin' her arms round his neck, 'I'm 'fraid he's due to crease, an' you an' I surely dies if he does. Ain't there no way to fix it?'

'Why, cert,' chips in Dan Boggs, 'an' we make the trip too easy! Jest to spare Nell's feelings I'll play this hand fur you, an' set up the drinks!'

'Not much,' cries Cherokee; 'I stands my hands all reg'lar. Cheer up, Nell! Clean-strain people in our business has to hold themselves ready for any little complication, an' they niver weakens nor crawls down. An' another thing, which is hard on this man, I'm bung plumb in the middle of a run of luck; I held fours twice last night with a flush and a full hand out agin 'em. I'll fix him sure!'

So Nell lets go on him, an' allows she'll go home an' not see the shootin', being a female an' timid. An' we applaude the idee, for we don't want our man's nerve shook.

Well, the twenty minutes was up, and the Red Dog man takes his gun an' goes up the middle of the street, then he turns up his big sombrero, cocks his gun, an' waits. Then Boggs walks out with Cherokee an' places him about a hundred yards off, an' says, loud: 'When all is ready I stands to one side, and asks if you all is prepared. Next I counts one, two, three, an' drops my hat. Both fires at the drop of the hat, an' after first fire advances or runs as you dern please.'

So Boggs goes to the side of the street, counts, an' drops his hat, an' 'Bangety, bang, bang!' goes the rifles like the roll of a drum. Cherokee could work a rifle like a bell-punch, and that Red Dog man wasn't behind on the deal. About the fifth fire the stranger sorter steps forward an' drops his gun, an', standing steady for a second, he cripples forward all slow at the knee, an' then comes down on his face like a land-slide. There war two bullets through his lungs, an' the red froth war a-coming from his lips plenteous. We picks him up an' lays him on a monte table in the Early Bird, an', when he comes around a bit, he says, faint-like: 'I want you alls to take off my moccasins an' pack me inter the street; I ain't allowing my old mother in Missouri shall hev it throwed up to her thet I died in a saloon, fer she 'bominates them surely, an' I ain't dying with my boots on, nayther.'

So we packs him back inter the street, an', after we gets his boots off, he stiffens out with a gasp, and was too dead to skin. Wonderful obstinate man, he war due dead minutes before, but jest held on to get his feet clear.

Suddenly Dan Boggs, who was looking at the dead man's rifle, says: 'What sort of a game is this, I asks? This here man looks as if he war plumb locoed! Here's his hindsights wedged up to a thousand yards, an' he's been a-shooting cartridges with a hundred and twenty grains of powder into them. Between the sights and the powder he was aimin' dead plumb at Cherokee, an' the bullets was a flying forty feet over him! Nellie,' says he, a looking remorseful at the girl, who coloured up and began to cry, 'did you cold deck this yere Red Dog man this a-way?'

'I couldn't a-lived none,' sobbed Nell, 'if so be he'd got Cherokee, so I slides over when you alls war awaiting, an' fixed his gun some. I aims it all for the best, an' to save Cherokee!'

'Which I shorely think you did,' says Boggs. 'The way that Red Dog man maniperlited his weepoon showed he knowed his business, an', 'ceptin' for you fixin' things up a little fur him, I'm free to say that by this time there would be holes in Cherokee not shown on the original plan. Well, gents, drinks is in order. Hist'ry never showed a game with a woman in it that was on the dead sq'are, an' we meekly bears our burden with the rest!'

As old Ike concluded his picturesque story, he leaned forward and stirred the fire in an absent way, as if still passing through the experience, then he continued, slowly: 'I aboors duoells, an' considers them some due to ge'grafy, and some to folks bringin' up! The East knows nothin' of 'em, the South-west hangs up handy at every social gathering. When a man sees the signs getting his way he picks out his meat, saa-says up, an' declar's himself. Next it's "Bang, bang!" white smoke, and the matter's arranged and settled. The one who still adorns our midst takes a drink on the house, while St. Peter unbars a lot an' arranges gate money an' seat check with the other in the realms of light! That's all there is to it! The tide of life again flows on. to the sea with 'nary a ripple on its eternal breast!'

The Major whispered to me as we turned in, 'Ike was called Cherokee in those days, but keep it quiet.' So I was not surprised next day when I turned over a pretty hard right and left to hear Ike say in a musing tone: 'It's a gran' feelin' when one makes a real good shot, an' I guess a fairly clean-lived

rustler gets good shootin' in heaven as well as the Injuns! I'm often glad we buried his rifle with that man from Red Dog—it may come in handy.'

FULLERTON'S PANTHER.

By HAROLD BINDLOSS.

WE had been unfortunate at Maple Hill, which was then a very unfinished ranche hidden among the redwoods of Vancouver Island, when Fullerton rode in for a few days' shooting. He had travelled forty miles from Nanaimo on the back of a Cayuse pony, which was bleeding in places, having, he said, fallen down among the half-rotten branches that then cumbered the trail, and there was no mistaking him for a very young naval officer. It was nearly dark at the time, and late in the fall, for a few maples flamed with gold and crimson on the edge of the clearing, while my comrade Graham, its owner, sat on a pine-stump smoking, in a very bad humour.

There was a reason for this, because Graham returning, with a number of hardly earned dollars, from making a Government trail, to spend the fall and winter improving his ranche, proceeded, with my assistance, to burn off his last few acres 'slashing,' where the great fir trunks and branches lay piled in swaths. The wind, however, was stronger than we expected, and running through the dried-up undergrowth, in spite of our efforts, burned off his house as well, a not uncommon accident, while now all that remained of the rough log building was the pile of ashes and charred timber behind us.

'The hotel down at the settlement is full of timber-right selectors—at least, that's what I think they called themselves—and the man who owned it said you would, no doubt, be good enough to put me up,' said Fullerton, and I saw that Graham was in a quandary. No stranger is ever turned away empty in that country (and Graham was also a well-educated Englishman), while there was no other homestead within some distance.

'That was very kind of him. Where did you get the Cayuse?' he said irrelevantly, and laughed when the new-comer answered 'Bought him for ten dollars at Englishman's River.'

'He would be dear at five,' said Graham. 'That's a horse with a record. Hasn't bitten any pieces out of you yet?—well, he certainly will. As to the other thing, sit down and make yourself at home; at present we're camping over the working oxen in the barn. That idiot yonder has burnt down my house.'

The speech was characteristic of Graham, and he gave Fullerton, who said he was not particular, which was certainly as well, of his best: cold venison like leather, grindstone-bread baked among wood ashes, and drips, which is probably flavoured glucose. The latter rose from his straw bed early, and, tramping to the river for a swim, came back very blue in face, because that stream was fed by melting snow, with a vivid account of how he had fallen among great black and yellow water-snakes, which are, however, perfectly harmless. Then he set out in search of deer, taking a double Express with him, besides Graham's terrier, and the Cayuse, which returned alone two hours later. Fullerton returned at nightfall, very hungry, with his garments badly rent, doubtful if there were any deer in the country. He, however, thought he heard something rustling in the fern near another ranche, and was crawling on hands and knees towards it when he came upon the owner.

'Light out of this!' said the latter, leaning on an axe; 'the last time they came some of you fellows shot my cow. I suppose you're stalking my plough-ox now, and we've no use for cattle-killers crawling loose round here.'

'I told him I was merely one of the ——'s company looking for deer,' Fullerton informed us, 'and the fellow said he might have been a barrister if he hadn't known better; while, when in the same breath, he asked me to have dinner, and promised to turn a fierce dog loose if he heard any shooting; I said nothing worth repeating, and came away.'

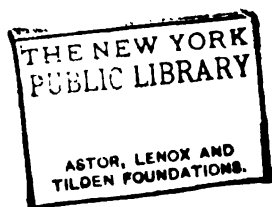
'He would have kept his word,' said Graham; 'Davies is a nice man, but he hasn't forgiven the last naval detachment for killing his livestock. You try along the lake side to-morrow.'

Fullerton did so, and fell among the horrible Devil's Club, which left its spines rankling in him; but though he could certainly shoot well, it takes a long training to see the wild creatures in their native bush. As the trout's back matches the gravel, so the barred or dappled fur fades invisible amid the varying tints of fallen branches or withered fern. Then, because

"bounded almost under his horses feet"



L. Edwards. 1902



Fullerton seemed to take his failures to heart, Graham promised that next day he would find a deer for him.

It was noon when we started, leaving Trip, who, although a dog of sense, was rather a nuisance in the woods, behind ; but he joined us presently, and was suffered to remain at the request of Fullerton, whom he had taken a fancy to. Graham was skilled in woodcraft, but we were unfortunate, and it was sunset when, after painfully crawling on hands and knees among the roots of the willows filling a higher valley, we came out upon the edge of a steep descent. Slopes of shale, huge fragments of rock snow carried from the heights above, and a wisp of climbing pines stretched down to the water, which still glimmered steelily in a chasm below.

Here we flung ourselves down, Fullerton dejectedly, among some seedling spruce, and, being tired of crawling over fallen logs, and through matted thickets, I was glad to fill a pipe and glance about me meditatively. Far off to the north-east, the sunset still burned along ethereal peaks of snow, calling them up, as it were, into the scope of human vision out of an immensity of distance. Near at hand, trains of mist rolled down across the rigid battalions of conifers on the opposite hill, until the lake was blotted out, and we could hear the river which fed it roaring hoarsely through smoky vapour. We expected neither deer nor bear there, and I did not think it judicious to mention that I had seen the tracks of a panther in the valley we had just climbed out of, for it was late already, and Fullerton would doubtless have insisted upon following them.

Panther are not uncommon in various parts of Vancouver Island, and while I heard no instance of their actually attacking a man, they showed very small fear of him. A surveyor I knew well heard an angry snarling when running a chain through a thicket, which grew louder until he presently desisted ; and when riding into the settlement at dusk a few days later, along a trail half-smothered in giant fern, a panther bounded almost under his horse's feet, and vanished with the collie trotting before him. Another carried off a good-sized hog from right under the hotel verandah, where a dozen men were sitting. It leapt out from among the redwood trunks, and there was only a squeal from the hog and a crash of undergrowth, while the men snatched up their rifles, before the porker disappeared for ever. Five miles a day is fair travelling for any one in the bush of that district, which explains why they failed to overtake it.

'Get hold of the dog!' said Graham, startling me out of a reverie. 'Wind's the right way. Now, Fullerton, can you see anything near the break in the willows?'

Laying a hand on Trip's neck, I faintly made out something which might be either branch or horn against the dusky leaves. As I surmised, in spite of his maritime training, Fullerton could not at first see it.

'There!' said Graham, in a hoarse whisper; 'under the skeleton fork.' And Fullerton, whose fingers seemed to tremble with excitement, said presently:

'Now I've got it; well over a hundred yards, isn't it?'

'I'd take a full bead at a hundred, and try for that twig below it if I were you,' said Graham, and Fullerton settled to his work methodically, while my comrade watched him with ironical curiosity. The beast was evidently one of the small wood-deer, which are plentiful and not particularly timorous, though very hard to see in the bush, and with one horn partly showing among the leaves, it made a difficult target in the fading light. A rancher would have picked up his rifle and fired several times from the cylinder rapidly, but the naval man wriggled down at full length, crossed his legs, and carefully found a place for his left elbow; while I kept my fingers on the terrier's throat, and wondered whether the deer would wait until he was ready. Then there was a flash from the tilting muzzle, a blue wisp drifted past, and while the echoes rolled along the rocks above, we heard a rustling among the willows. Fullerton snapped out the cartridge, and leapt up, shouting eagerly, 'That's got him!'

'Hold the dog,' said Graham. 'Keep still, it's coming out down-hill,' and further along the willows a deer broke cover, travelling in flying bounds down the steep face of the declivity towards a belt of thick timber through which a watercourse thundered. Bushels of rattling shingle rolled down beneath it. Fullerton fired once, Graham twice, and missed; then it plunged down an almost sheer descent, turning over on the way, it seemed to us, but rose again at the bottom and vanished beneath the wall of climbing trunks. Fullerton was about to follow at top speed, but Graham seized his jacket.

'Hold on; you'll certainly break your neck that way,' he said. 'The deer is badly hit, and he'll bring up in a thicket if you don't crowd him. Stick fast to Trip in the meantime.'

An arduous scramble followed, for the *débris* brought down by a snow-slide slipped away beneath us, and I wished that Graham

had carried his own dog, because the little beast, which he feared would have helped to keep the quarry in flight, wriggled fiercely in my arms, and both hands were badly needed in that descent. At last I lost my footing, and blundered down full length; the dog escaped, to dash into the timber with an exultant bark, while, when I picked myself up, Graham remarked, 'Now I guess you've done it. There goes our last chance of coming up with the deer to-night.'

Fullerton said nothing, though he regarded me reproachfully, and, limping on with a bleeding knee, I managed to overtake them on the edge of the bush, where they were burrowing head-foremost through a mass of withered fern, probably eight feet high, whose fronds clung about one like a net. With some difficulty we passed it, and presently, when a curious bark from Trip came out of the dimness, stood fast, breathing hard and listening intently. The evening glow lingers in that region, and the hill-side faced the west, so here and there a saffron brilliancy glimmered behind the great branches. Below, however, there was only deepening shadows among the colonnades of mighty trunks; but I could make out, not far ahead, a few fallen logs, whose lower ends were lost in thickets, while their spreading branches, interlocked, rested, still partly clothed with twigs and needles, against the towering columns of living wood, perhaps thirty feet from the ground. It was one of the horrible tangles caused by one rotten fir bringing several others down with it, which are common thereabouts and only an axe can open a way through, while we had no axe with us.

'There's something wrong with Trip,' said Graham. 'It's not a deer he's growling at in that manner. Hallo! there's something I didn't look for going on in yonder.'

A rustling commenced in the thicket, followed by a sharp snapping of rotten twigs. The dog yapped savagely, though as any one might recognise, with fear, as well as rage; then we heard a curious cat-like snarl, and a kind of cough; something heavy plunged through the undergrowth, and the sound it made was succeeded by a shrill and almost human yell of pain.

'That's a panther!' said Graham. 'It has brought our deer up, and fixed poor Trip!'

Having some experience of how helpless a man is in that kind of bush, I had no desire to blunder upon a panther among matted branches, thorn, and fern, though there was a pitiful appeal in the last yelp from the dog. So, trusting to the

creeper-spikes upon my boots, I took the bushman's usual road, and leaping upon the largest log, proceeded to walk along it until it rose some twenty feet in the air. Staring down I could at first see nothing but crossed branches and withering greenery in the dusky pit beneath.

Then I saw Fullerton working his way into the fern, and heard Graham say, 'Come back, you idiot, and let a man who knows these blamed bear-traps settle how to get at him.'

'It's my deer,' said Fullerton, who, next moment, fell over something, and I caught Graham's answer :

'Anyway, it's my dog ; if you will go in, get behind me.'

They disappeared amid a crackling, and grasping another branch I swung myself across a pitfall on to a neighbouring log, and loosing the slung rifle, worked my way along it, astride, in the hope of finding a means of descent, or being able to get a shot at the panther. Once more I made out the two men, some distance below, and just then the ominous snarling broke out again somewhere very close to them, beside a faint yelp from the dog, while the whole tangle seemed to rattle when Fullerton blazed off his rifle—at a venture, apparently. Shut in by leaves and twigs, the smoke hung about them heavily, and curled up towards me in thin blue wisps, while Fullerton called out excitedly :

'I saw something, and it wasn't the dog ; believe I hit it ; come in and finish him.'

'Can you make out anything ?' Graham shouted up to me, and when I answered that I could not, muttering what I thought was 'Crazy lunatic !' hurled himself into a thicket in the wake of his companion, who went through headlong, with, as I remembered, an empty rifle. In his excitement he had not re-loaded. For a moment I was doubtful as to what was best to do, because the man who drops into a pitfall of that description runs a heavy risk of staking himself on broken branches, or breaking his leg, and an injudicious fusillade might have injured one of the others. I was also not wholly sorry that the first reason would have justified any one in choosing a clearer place for descent. So, while the snarling grew louder, I crawled further along the treacherous bark until I could faintly see the fern sway beneath me, and was fixing myself for a shot when Fullerton floundered past, and, clenching his empty rifle, floundered apparently right in upon it.

Graham's head was also visible a few yards away, then I lost

it, and there was only a confused crackling until I heard a thud, which might have been made by a heavy object striking something soft; but this was lost in the crash of Graham's weapon, and a red flash streaked the gloom. It was promptly followed by another. Three or four jarring reports filled the bush with sound, for Graham was dexterous at jerking cartridges from cylinder to chamber; then he, too, disappeared in the smoke, and wriggling forward I seized another branch, and either dropped recklessly, or perhaps fell by accident, into a bewildering maze of undergrowth and fern. It closed above my head; there were vines of thorny species among it, lacing the fronds together, and when I floundered clear, minus half my jacket, as subsequently appeared, Fullerton was shouting triumphantly not far away, and Graham leaned, with blood on his hands, against a hemlock. The panther, or whatever it was, had vanished completely.

'Poor little chap,' said Fullerton, tenderly lifting a white object which whined. 'He's not dead, at least; can't you light a fire while we do something for him, and cut up the deer? I'll swear I hit that panther, and he's not far off.'

'Not without turning ourselves into a fricassee,' said the rancher. 'Have you ever seen a fire run through a dried-up bush? No!—well, it's a mighty fine spectacle from a safe distance. I've got to thank you, Fullerton, for saving that dog, and I'll fix the deer so we can pack it out to-morrow without the meat going bubbly. Then we'll hunt round for the panther if he's here. I wouldn't take a hundred dollars for crawling any further after him head-first to-night.'

The deer was certainly there, still warm but dead, while for several minutes Graham was busy with his long-bladed knife, after which we expended considerable time, and I fear some language, in extricating ourselves, while one at least of the party had an uncomfortable feeling that he might step upon a wounded panther at any moment.

At last we struck a trail that afforded rather better travelling than the bush, though forest trails are not to be recommended after dark, and without more misadventures of consequence, reached our quarters in Graham's barn. We found our way up the ladder to a space over the working oxen walled off from the poor oat-hay by means of a unique torch, for Graham held up a dried fish from a parcel the Indians had given him. These, unprepared, I think, in any other way, will generally burn like a

candle when ignited. He lit the kerosene lamp with it, and proceeded to examine Trip, who lay with his shoulder badly torn on Fullerton's knee.

'The beast must have struck him there,' said the latter, stroking the reddened back. 'I suppose those brutes use both teeth and claws; have you got anything handy to tie him up with?'

'It's probable,' said Graham. 'I've never experimented personally. We've the usual arnica and Friar's balsam. Every man who owns an axe cuts himself now and then, and the only one I know of who didn't, lost his toes because an axe fell off a new barn-roof and gashed them through for him. Slit up that cotton flour-bag for a bandage.'

I knew the reference to the man and the axe was true, and slitting the soft cotton, for nobody in that region throws a flour-bag away, asked, 'Are you quite sure there was a panther in the thicket after all?'

'Quite,' said Fullerton, drily. 'When we find it to-morrow there'll be one wound at least upon its head. Now, Graham, I'll pull this together while you tie it.'

They were of the same up-bringing: the naval officer with the freshness of youth showing through the sea-tan in his pitiful face, while I could see the dog's eyes shining as he licked one of his soothing hands; and the rancher, gaunt and hardened by heavy physical toil, who I knew would, in his own reserved way, do as much as any one living for an unfortunate man or beast. Both had the same steady eyes and fearless look, and of the pair, perhaps because he was most accustomed to that attire, the older man showed up best in the dilapidated garments which, torn and reddened in places, hung about his sinewy limbs.

'He'll do now,' said Fullerton, patting the dog's head as he laid him on my spare jacket, and I knew that incident had initiated a friendship which, if circumstances permitted, would last for life.

The sun had not risen above the redwoods which walled Graham's clearing in, while the dew lay thick in frosted globules on the fern surrounding the serried stumps of others that cumbered the red plough-land, when we started again, taking an axe and a cross-cut saw with us. They were not needed, however, for it was easier to force a way through the thicket in clear daylight, and looking about with practised eyes, Graham picked up the thread of the story of the three-cornered affray.

'The deer was pretty bad, judging by the blood-trail, when the panther jumped on him here,' he said. 'Those beasts are tolerably powerful—saw one go off with a hog, and it looks as if Trip, who ought to have known better, had fooled yapping round yonder bush until the panther let out and knocked him clear.'

We stood above the deer, which was torn at the neck and shoulder, as he spoke, and Fullerton said quietly, 'I think you're a little out; it wasn't happening quite that way when I hit him.'

Other blood-splashes led us on, and, remembering the marks on the deer, we followed them with due caution and some difficulty through the tangled bush, until Fullerton flung up his borrowed hat when the quarry lay huddled among the crimson wine-berries before us. It was the first opportunity I had of inspecting a panther closely, and I noted the flat-topped head, small ears, huge fangs with reddened froth still clotted about them, and lithe body slender in flank with enormously muscular forward half, while Graham acted as showman.

'Two bullets in him; not very big, but precious ugly—they're in no way bashful brutes either,' he said. You must have got him there in the shoulder with the first shot, smashing it, and that's probably why he waited. That's the mark of my Winchester further aft. Hallo!'—and he pointed to a red gash on the scalp—'your gun couldn't have been loaded when you ran in, and you said you hit him. What could have made yonder wound on his head.'

'This,' said Fullerton, lifting his rifle's heelplate with a boyish laugh. 'I hit him with the only thing I had, and that gave you the opportunity, otherwise he would have broken poor Trip's back.'

'Well, I'm blamed!' said Graham. 'Mr. Fullerton, you have considerable nerve of your own.'

We proceeded with the skinning, and Fullerton did his share in packing the hide, head, and venison home. The deer was one of the small ones, with poor horns, found upon that coast, and a man can usually carry one readily a good distance upon his shoulder with the forelegs round his neck, and the hind ones passed under his arms and then fastened to the others in front. Next day he took his departure in high spirits, and before he did so, said awkwardly: 'I am everlastingly obliged to you both, and I don't quite know how to put it; but about the recompense?'

'I don't keep a hotel,' said Graham, curtly. 'We enjoyed your company, and should be glad to see you whenever the Admiralty can spare you. Hope we'll have better quarters ready when next you come along. You see, the stranger is always welcome in this country, and it's an especial privilege to entertain a man who is willing to tackle a panther with the wrong end of a gun.'

Thereupon, with apologies, Fullerton got upon the back of the Cayuse, which bared its teeth and kicked furiously, waved Graham's battered hat, which he had borrowed, having lost his own, and departed with the assurance that he had never enjoyed a holiday half as much before; while Graham, chuckling softly, proceeded to rub over the pegged-out skin for him.

IN THE RACE SPECIAL.

By FOX RUSSELL.



QUIRE TOPTHORNE prided himself more upon his attainments as a practical agriculturist and stock-breeder than his prowess in the realms of sport. Not but what he was a thorough sportsman: one, indeed, of the best type. He hunted a pack of Harriers two days a week, besides getting an occasional gallop with the local fox-hounds. He was also a good shot and a fair fisherman; but although a breeder of equine bloodstock, he had always kept clear of the tortuous path of horse-racing.

The Squire had no children, but a nephew, Frank Halliday, lived with him, and was generally regarded as the heir to Topthorne Manor, with its broad acres.

Like his uncle, young Halliday, a good-looking lad of twenty, was a keen sportsman, and of rather a more ambitious type than the squire, for he aspired not only to hunt and shoot, but also to take a hand at racing and polo. He had tried vainly, for some years, to induce the squire to enter and run a horse or two at the local race-meetings, and it was only after a great deal of persuasion that the old gentleman gave a grudging assent to enter a four-year-old of his own breeding, Ivanhoe by name, in the Muggleton Handicap, a race for gentleman riders. Frank

Halliday was to make his first appearance in a racing-jacket on this occasion.

The young horse was well-bred enough to win a Derby, and a very good-looking one to boot. Master Frank hugged himself at the idea of opening his public riding career with a brilliant win. He had ridden Ivanhoe in nearly all his training gallops, which were taken in the great park surrounding Topthorne Manor, under the careful superintendence of a private trainer; and although the horse was to run untried, his jockey felt full of confidence for the result.

As the day of the race approached, the Squire became more and more uneasy. He was a plain man, a stalwart pillar of the Church; quite at home with the ordinary routine of a country gentleman's life; but this racing business had begun to get on his nerves.

'I don't like it, Frank,' he said, over the top of his irreproachable high-gilled collar. 'I don't understand half the conditions, whilst all this jargon of "weight-for-age," "penalties and allowances," "selling clauses," and forty other things, is so much Greek to me.'

Oh, that'll be all right, uncle,' replied Frank, with the splendid confidence engendered of youth and inexperience. 'Don't you worry yourself.'

'Well, I wish we were well out of it, my boy,' he rejoined, nervously polishing his spectacles on a huge, coloured silk handkerchief. 'I don't like doing anything I don't understand. But still, for your sake, I hope everything will go smoothly; but this racing seems to me to be very anxious work.'

On the eventful day which was to witness the decision of the Muggleton Handicap, the Squire, after spending an hour and a half, with the aid of his valet, in making an immaculate toilet, drove to the nearest railway station, accompanied by the sanguine and light-hearted Frank. The latter's kit-bag, containing his racing outfit, was put into a first-class carriage by a servant, and then the Squire and his nephew, armed with every sporting paper they could buy, took their places therein.

Just before the train started, a portly gentleman of dignified mien, wearing a tall hat with turned up brim and episcopal gaiters, espied the Squire, and pulled up short at his carriage door.

'Ah, my dear friend, delighted to see you,' exclaimed the

Bishop. 'Have you room for me? that's right—and Master Frank, too! How do you do?'

The great Church luminary entered the carriage, and after shaking hands with the pair, settled himself into a comfortable corner. The train moved off, and the three men began to chat. The Right Reverend talked of hunting, recalling his own Oxford days, when he used to patronise the Bicester and the Heythrop. Then the train pulled up at a station, and from the crowd standing on the platform, evidently waiting to go to the Muggleton Race-meeting, a gorgeously bejewelled individual, with a fat, greasy-looking face, stepped forward, and after peering into the Squire's carriage, wrenched open the door and entered.

This irruption occasioned a brief pause in the conversation, one which was eventually broken by Frank observing that they—his uncle and himself—were going to Muggleton Races.

The Bishop's tone was hardly so cordial as before, when making a rejoinder to this.

'Indeed,' he said. 'Oh, really, I—er—had an idea that you—or, at least, that your uncle—' here he made an inclination of the head towards Mr. Tophthorne—'did not approve—go in for racing.'

The Squire coughed uneasily, and rather wished that Frank had not mentioned the subject.

The Bishop opened the *Church News*, and began reading it over the top of his gold-rimmed spectacles. Frank looked out of the window. The bejewelled individual took advantage of the lull to address Mr. Tophthorne.

'You'll excuse me, sir, but I 'eard you say you was going to the races.'

The Squire nodded assent.

'Tricky meetin' this to 'ave anything to do with. There's such a lot of shuntin' done, that if you ain't "in the know," why, you can't do a bit o' good for yourself.

The old gentleman blinked at him like an owl suddenly exposed to the daylight. What all this jargon meant, he hadn't the faintest idea.

'Yes,' went on the confidential stranger; 'I shouldn't be wastin' my time 'ere to-day, 'cept that I *do* know somethin'. And it's somethin' good, too. A real 'ot startin' price job, this'll be, an' no error.'

Squire Tophthorne adjusted his glasses, and focussed the talkative gentleman through them.

'I dare say your remarks are perfectly true, and very interesting, but as I am almost a stranger to racing, and——'

'Ah, that's just where it is, yer know, that's just where it is, that's where yer get 'ad,' broke in the bejewelled one, affably. 'Now I've been racin' all my life, as yer may say, and as you're a gentleman that ain't much accustomed to the game, I might be able to give yer a useful 'int or two.'

'Thank you ; but I don't know that——' began the Squire, freezingly, but his would-be mentor was not to be put down.

'Well now, I dessay you'll be 'avin' a bit on the princerval race to-day—the Muggleton 'Andicap. I can tell yer of somethin' that's about as near a certainty as makes no odds ; John Porter trains 'im, an' John Porter's brother, who's a pal o' mine, told me that the 'orse 'ad ten pounds in 'and, straight.' And the speaker tried his best to look impressive.

Squire Topthorne felt very uncomfortable. Instinctively he knew that the Bishop's eye was upon him. He turned to his tormentor and was about to make a distant reply, when Frank broke in, with a laugh, and addressing the stranger said : 'What about Mr. Topthorne's Ivanhoe ? don't you think he has a chance of winning to-day ?'

The affable gentleman opposite smiled pityingly.

'Ah,' he said, 'that shows 'ow little you know o' what you may call the real wickedness o' racin'. Now, I been at it from a boy, and I know every man, pretty well, as goes racin'. Why, that old Topthorne is as big a rogue as ever lived, an I wouldn't back a 'orse belongin' to 'im—not unless I knew, mind yer, that 'e meant winnin', an' that the old man's money was on—not for anythin' !'

The Squire's *Times* dropped from his nerveless hands, and fluttered floorwards.

'Yes,' went on the well-informed one, in bland unconsciousness, whilst Frank stuffed a handkerchief into his mouth to choke back his laughter, 'that Topthorne's a reg'lar 'ot un ! The Stooards 'ave 'ad their eye on 'im, for a long time parst' (here the *Church News* was lowered, and the episcopal countenance turned, with stony stare, upon the horrified Squire). 'Take my tip, sir, don't you touch anythin' runnin' in 'is colours. I knew 'im as a boy—'is father kep' a licensed 'ouse, Whitechapel way.'

Mr. Septimus Topthorne, whose family was one of the oldest in the county, and had been Lords of Topthorne

Manor for four hundred years past, gave a gasp of astonishment, and continued to stare at the gentleman opposite, open-mouthed, and in silence. Frank was getting purple in the face with suppressed laughter, whilst the Bishop's gaze grew more and more stony.

Another station. A tall man, with a brown beard, and a hawk-like face, after glancing through the window, got in to the carriage. Opening a copy of the *Sporting Life*, he held it well before his face, and soon became apparently immersed in its contents. The voluble stranger resumed his flow of eloquence as soon as the train started again.

'No. You mustn't 'ave anything to do with Mr. Blooming Topthorne's 'orses, sir. Why, 'e ses to me, one day, "Arry," 'e ses, "my 'orse's 'ead won't be loose to-day—'e's only out for a airing—so don't you go wastin' no money on 'im. Oh, 'e don't make no disguise of it to 'is pals—ah, Topthorne is a bloomin' rogue, an' no mistake!'

At last the Squire found his tongue.

'Sir,' he began, in his best 'Justice-of-the-Peace' style, 'I don't know who you are, but of all the—the—the—'

'Oh, that don't matter a little bit. Every one knows 'Arry Socker, that's my name. I don't wonder as you're a bit surprised at what I'm tellin' yer, but yer see, I knows the ropes, an' you don't. 'Owever, what we wants—me and you—is to spot the 'orse that'll win to-day, don't we? Now let's 'ave our bit on to this one o' John Porter's that 'is brother was tellin' me about. S'pose me an' you 'as, say, twenty pound on, between us? and as you're a stranger to race-courses, why, just to oblige a gentleman, I should be 'appy to take your tenner, and invest it for yer at the best odds possible. What d'yer say?'

And as though to inspire confidence, the affable and much be-ringed stranger dived into his trouser pockets, and brought out a handful of gold and notes.

And just at this precise moment of time, the hawk-faced gentleman with the brown beard, struck in. Laying aside his newspaper, he turned to the man at his side, and said :

'You'd better hand those '—indicating the notes and coins—' over to me. I shall have to take charge of them as soon as you're searched. Why, Artful 'Arry, I hardly thought you'd be mug enough not to recognise your old friend, Sergeant Bagster, although I did happen to be wearing this thing,'

coolly pulling off his false beard as he spoke. 'And so you're trying the same little lay again. Dear me, dear me. And you're clever, too, or you couldn't have kept out of our reach so long. But there's a want of originality about you; you always play the same game, the race-course sharp. That's where we always reckon to gather you in, and that's where we always do, sooner or later.'

The gentleman thus familiarly addressed as Artful 'Arry, looked round at the detective with the glint of murder in his eye. Suddenly, he lost all control of himself, and gave vent to such a torrent of oaths that the Bishop hastily put down his newspaper and stopped his ears with his fingers.

'That's right, throw it off your chest, and you'll feel better,' said the detective soothingly. 'We shall be at Paxton Station directly, where I've got a couple of plain clothes men, who'll look after you on the road to Holloway.'

Then, turning his keen gaze upon the Bishop, he said :

'Old hand at this game, I expect—rather strange that I don't know your face, though. What name are you going under?'

His Right Reverence turned purple with indignation.

'Sir!' he exclaimed. 'How dare you insinuate——'

'Oh, stow all that,' broke in the detective in cool masterful tones, such as the Bishop had never known to be used to him since that now far distant time when he had been a struggling curate; 'the clergyman dodge is as old as the hills. You're the bonnet, I suppose?'

'The—the—the wha-a-at?' gasped the Bishop.

'Pal of yours, isn't he?' continued the police-officer, turning to 'Artful 'Arry.' 'He's in the joint, eh?'

A wicked leer came over the detected criminal's face, as he replied :

'Yes, 'course 'e is.'

'I thought so. You'll have to come along with me,' said the hawk-like man, in uncompromising tones.

The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Bilchester had never come so near to having a fit, in his life, before. He started up from his seat, scarlet in the face, and struggling for breath.

'Now, no violence, or I shall slip the bracelets on to you!' exclaimed the detective. 'Ah, here we are at Paxton.'

And as the train slowed down, two stalwart-looking men

whose stolid faces and enormous boots at once proclaimed to the world that they were members of 'the Force,' came alongside the carriage to assist their superior.

The door was swung open and a constable directed to take charge of the Bishop. But his Reverence was of the Church Militant; he would not give in without a fight for it.

'I defy you, sir, to lay a finger upon me. I am the Bishop——'

'That's enough. Tell that to the Inspector at the station,' said the constable, seizing his victim by the wrist.

Just at that moment Squire Topthorne, who had been vainly trying to make himself heard, laid his hand upon the detective's arm.

'I assure you that this is indeed the Bishop of Bilchester. I am Septimus Topthorne of Topthorne Manor, and the Bishop is my friend.'

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Topthorne—I *was* your friend—I am your friend no longer!' came the rather astonishing rejoinder, in sepulchral tones from the Bishop. A crowd of people, some of them well dressed, and others of the labouring type, had gathered round the carriage-door, and the station-master hurried up to say that the train must not be kept waiting any longer.

The detective looked puzzled. If he were to let a prisoner slip through his fingers, he would be jeered at throughout Scotland Yard, whilst, on the other hand, if his prisoner really were the Bishop of Bilchester, he would get into serious trouble over the affair, by retaining him in custody. Meanwhile, by the station-master's peremptory orders, they all alighted on the platform—except Frank, who had, perforce, to go on, in order to be in time to ride Ivanhoe in his race—and the Bishop—who was a man of great eloquence—seized upon the pause created by the detective's hesitation, to say a 'few words' to Squire Topthorne, in strong, resonant tones.

'You have created a very terrible condition of affairs for both yourself and me,' he began severely. 'Whilst you kept to hunting, shooting, and respectability, all was well with you. But now, in your sere old age, that you have flung yourself into the wild vortex of horse-racing—now that, forsaking all the traditions of your ancient house, you have consorted with a criminal and—and—er—a person "in the know"—I believe I am correct in attributing that expression to the gentleman with

the brass watch-chain standing over there—you have brought disgrace upon yourself and me. What will the clergy of this large and important diocese think of me, their head and pastor, when they learn, through the medium of the peculiarly nasty little local paper which flourishes here, that my grey hairs have been brought with sorrow to the—er—to this railway station, when I wanted to go on to the next? And to be seen here in charge of a constable! Oh, it is all too horrible!’

Poor Squire Topthorne, though he could hardly adopt the scathing censure of the Bishop’s speech in its entirety—hardly thinking he had been guilty of all that the right reverend gentleman had so freely laid to his charge, nevertheless felt a terrible remorse that through his instrumentality, however innocent, the Bishop should have suffered such indignity. But help was at hand. Sir John Lilford, the Governor of the County Gaol, happened to be on the platform, and the detective, approaching him deferentially, stated his difficulty, and asked Sir John if he could lend his aid in the matter of identification.

‘Certainly,’ assented the Governor, retracing his steps, and at once going up to the agitated group.

One look was enough.

‘Idiot!’ muttered Sir John. ‘You’ve got the Bishop!’

And the detective wished that the earth would open and swallow him up. But his reward came when, at the ensuing Assizes, Artful ‘Arry, *alias* Posh Blakins, *alias* the Yarner, secured five years’ retirement, and the man from Scotland Yard the judge’s commendation for having captured a dangerous racecourse ‘sharp’ in so dexterous a manner.

Frank Halliday won his race on Ivanhoe, but when he suggested further racing ventures, he found the Squire absolutely obdurate.

The old gentleman pulled up his high, stiff shirt collar balanced the gold-rimmed spectacles on his nose, and said,

‘I have been racing once, Frank. That experience will last me for some considerable time. Ivanhoe will make you a useful hunter. Take him as a birthday present from your uncle. At my time of life I think it in the highest degree unlikely that I shall ever again be seen travelling in a race special.’

FROM POINT TO POINT.

By 'ROCKWOOD.'

RESENTED by Sir Charles Sladenly for competition amongst the followers of the hounds of the different packs hunting in the county of S—— at the annual point-to-point Steeplechases. Won by ——.

Such was the unfinished inscription on a cup which stood on the sideboard of our old friend, Bill Ogden, one of the best judges of shorthorns in the West of England, a hard man to hounds, and a rare good game one at a pounding match.

'Won by—by who, Bill?' we asked.

'Won by me, of course!' was the reply.

'Then why don't you complete the inscription?'

'Well, you see, Tom Wilkin might not like it for one thing, and, for another, it might just spoil a good story.'

'Ah, I see! One of your's and Tom's old pounding matches I suppose, and you had the best of him?'

'Well, yes, I dare say it was a pounding match, but I hadn't the best of him. If you just wait a little, I'll let you hear. You must just let me tell my story as I would ride it cross-country.'

'All right, fire away. You have been up to snuff all your days either in the matter of cattle or horses, and no doubt you got hold of this cup that you are afraid to stick your name on in some out-of-the-way fashion, I'll be bound. They say over in the White Horse country they would rather tackle the devil than Bill Ogden in the matter of swopping horses, and I believe they are right.'

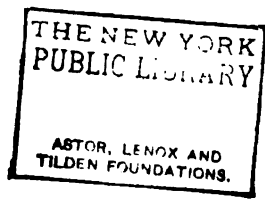
'Ah! they give me a good character, do they, down there? Well, I'm no flat at a bargain; and now I'll tell ye the true story about that cup.'

'You see, there was always a bit of jealousy between us on the north side of the Start river and the Whorlton Valley men on the south side. It was the old story of a run over an out-lying gorse covert, which we claimed as ours, but which they would persist in drawing. It was settled in our favour, and then it was burned down. That made things worse, for all our chaps would have it that they had set some low fellow to destroy it. However, it made the blaze between us bigger than ever. We



"Into the muck-pot!"

W. H. W. 11



never went into their country if we could help it, and when any of their men came over on to our side, they did not have a very gay time of it. Sir Charles did not like this state of things, and so he thought he would give this cup and 30*l.* for a point-to-point steeplechase. It was not sporting, he said, to see such want of neighbourliness. He was a very kind Christian sort of old gentleman, the baronet; and, though he did not hunt himself, he was a staunch preserver of foxes and a liberal subscriber to the Hunt Fund.

'Well, the end of the season came at last, and some of us had made up our mind that we would have a fair good neck-or-nothing ride for the cup. Tom Wilkin had a rattling big seven-year-old bay, which was fast, stout, and a most reliable fencer, and I had one just about as good, and could win, I thought, with Tom out of the way. Tom thought much in the same way as regards my chances; but we knew that there were some strangers in the Whorlton Vale who were better mounted than we were; in fact, they had horses quite up to the Grand National form. It was all on the cards, then, we would not be able to keep the cup on the north side of Start river unless we held it by our superior knowledge of the country. So we set about to suggest a course that would give strangers a little bit the worst of it.'

'Nice sort of sportsmen you are! but go on.'

'Oh, very well! All's fair in a pounding match, and we had a grudge about their blazing that gorse after the London Committee had given it over to us. It was worse than vulpicide, as our old master said, and that's worse than murder any day; there's no capital punishment capital enough for that. Still, there we were; they had the cattle, and we wanted the cup, and we got the course mapped off in a bit of our country which Tom Wilkin and I knew as well as our own turnip-fields—ay, every one of the five miles of it. Pantertown steeple to start, and Dockerville steeple to finish, both on the left, that was to be it. Dockerville steeple you can't see till you are close on to it.'

'All right, I can see what you are coming to all the same.'

'No you don't, just a bit yet. You just wait and hear my story out. Of course I could ride to Dockerville steeple blindfolded; so could Tom; so could the most of us. It was a stiffish course, too, with the Bleak Burn in the middle of it. Still, there were two or three thrusters on three-hundred-pound hunters, who had the reputation of being capital horsemen, coming over. We learned that on the market-day. "Come and

welcome," says we. They were London men, and didn't know us, nor did we know them. Our Vicar's young man, as mad a devil as ever wore black cloth, was a rare good sportsman, and Tom and I put him up. He knew them well, a rum 'un and no mistake. "You must win that cup," he says. "I wouldn't like 'em to have it on no terms, and they have fairly made up their minds for it, 30*l.* and all."

"Oh, they have, have they?" says I. "We'll take a bit of doing, with our horses in our own country!"

"Yes, but they have two hard-riding men on grand big horses that they are going to send over very quietly just to whip the whole lot of us. I know them both, but they don't know you, and I don't think they know Tom Wilkin."

"Well, they ain't lost much by not having *our* acquaintance I am sure. No, nor no other man says I; but they may gain a bit by *your* acquaintance. Neither you or Tom's to go to market on Monday, and on Tuesday, you know, the event comes off. You've both to come up late, and I'll see you weighed out smartly, and whatever I say to you, tumble to it, and so will Tom. I suppose Tom and you wouldn't mind cutting up the cup and the money if either of you won it?"

"Do anything, I will, so long as it don't go into the Whorlton country."

"All right," says he, "come up pretty close to time on Tuesday; the weights are 12-7 for all, and you can be near the thing, with a pound over."

'I didn't go to market that day as advised; folks said I was fighting shy of a market-day headache for the morning, but I had my head pretty clear, as you will see. I weighs myself in the barn scales pretty correctly, and on Tuesday morning walked slowly over to the Meet. There was a big crowd there, nearly all our boys; and out comes the curate—nice rum meek 'un he was to make a parson of. "How do you do, Tom?" he says to me, quite loud. "Ah, good old Tom Wilkin, I thought you weren't coming." "What the d——l are you a-Tomming of me for?" I says; when, with a wink, he says quietly: "You're Tom Wilkin to-day, you recollect, and Tom's Bill Ogden." Up come more of our boys, and it's all "Tom, old boy, how do you do?" and to make myself more "Tom" than ever, I goes up to Tom himself, when he comes up, and says, "How do you do, Bill, old boy?" and he says, "I'm all right, Tom; I hope you'll dust these two young Whorlton men." Then we had a chat, and he

says, "When you carry them through Wood Lane, and across Badger's Brook, I'll be all right."

'In ten minutes more we were weighed, and away I goes at a tearing pace, as if wanting to take a line of my own. When I had crossed a couple of fences, hanged if there weren't those two Whorlton dandies riding almost cheek and cheek with me. And they were on horses, too—clinkers, I could see, and more than a match for me, anyway. Well, my old one could jump, and was a smasher at rough places, and I takes 'em through what was a solid wall of young thorns. "That'll make some holes in their jackets," I says, "and rub off the pipe-clay." But they stuck to me all the same; I took them over four potato bings all alongside each other, laughing to myself all the time to see them floundering amongst them, and then through Wood Lane and over the Bleak Burn. I remembered Tom's words then, and took things easy. They would stick to me, they would, so I galloped them through a stack-yard, and up a lane which ended in Joe Randell's horse pond. I jumped into that, and they close after me, and as my big bay landed in the pond, he showered a nice mess over them, I can tell you.'

'Well, and where all the time were you driving to? You seem to have been on a grand old outing all to yourself.'

'Just hang a bit and I'll let you know! Knowing things were now pretty well right, I chose a nice easy line over grass, takes out my cigar-case, lights a weed, and began to take things mighty leisurely. They did not seem to like it a bit, I tell you, neither of 'em. Vengeance is a mighty sweet thing if you have been done over a swop or a bargain of anything, and I always grudged these men burning that gorse. I gives 'em one farewell jump over a hog-back stile, and then rides quietly up to the "Merry Flail" tavern, which was kept by an old ploughman of mine. "Joe," I calls out, "you fetch me a pint o' porter, and get some meal and water gruel for these gentlemen's horses with a little ale in it. They've been pounding very hard to show me they're real good 'uns, and no doubt we may arrange a swop for the best of 'em, and a little money for my old one. No gruel for him, thank you—he's quite fresh."

"Good-day, gentlemen," I says—this was the first time I spoke to them. "Good-day," says the eldest of them; "aren't you riding in the Point to Point Steeplechase?" "Young man," says I, "I engage in no such wickedness. I was over there to see the curate about important church matters, but rode away as hard as I

could to save my character as a churchwarden, after I had chatted with my friend Tom Wilkin about some lambs I'm going to sell him."

"But are you sure you're not Tom Wilkin?" said the youngest one.

"I'm pretty dead certain on it; why Tom, the wicked sinner, is riding hard to win Sir Charles's Cup, and he told me he'd have to go pretty smart, as there were two men over from Whorlton, with strict orders to stick to Tom Wilkin up to the last fence, and then race past and win. All I can say is that if they stick as close as you did to me, why, I'm afraid they'll have poor Tom after all. Just have a little old ale while your horse's gruel is being stirred, and if you have sufficient confidence in me—Bill Ogden's my name—as a guide, I'll——"

"Go to blazes, and take your ale and gruel too," was the reply of the elder one, and in the next minute they were off up the lane, whilst I roared with laughter.

'Well, I had brought them to a full-point, if not to Dockerville Steeple, where Tom won easily; we tossed for choice after he had got past the spire. He had the 30*l.*, I the Cup. So you see, somehow, it would not just do to complete that inscription yet awhile. I offered to sell it to the Whorlton boys as a Champion Cup for walking puppies, but they said they didn't like *second-hand things*. "Why don't you come and take the *first-hand*," I says, "and follow Tom Wilkin?"'

A RECORD RUN.

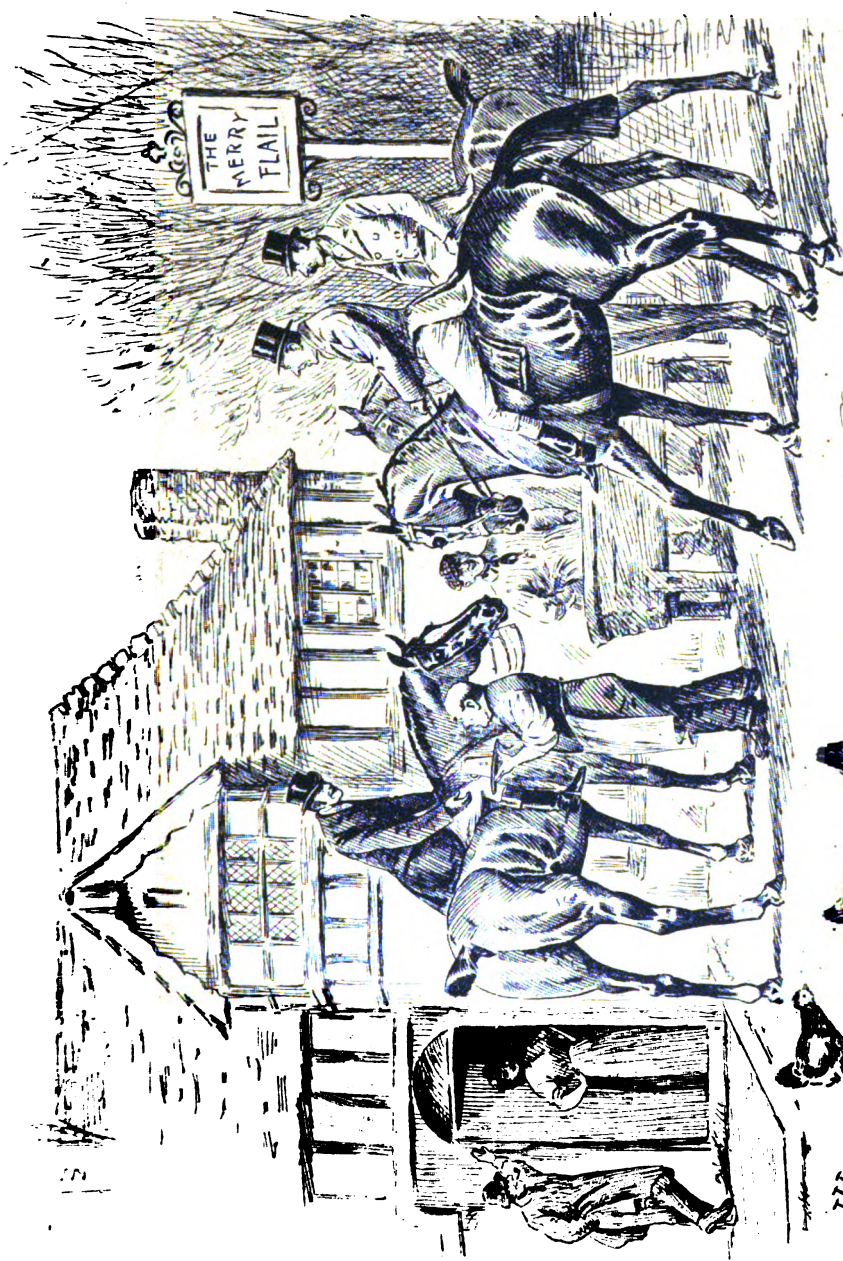
By M. BURTON-DURHAM.



ELL, well, Tim, it be holy wonderful, for I can't call to mind the big earth in the "Bushes" being empty for twenty years; no, not since I took over the farm after the poor old Governor's death? *Are you sure* there ain't a fox in the big earth, Tim?'

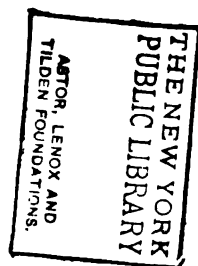
'Certain sure, Master William, for there baint as much as the show of a "pug's" pad or a scrap of "billet" round the mouth. It be masterful hard luck, seeing as how the hounds are to meet at the Bushes to-morrow, sir!'

'Aye, Tim, it do seem hard; but I warrant they get a run,



"arent you riding in the Bristle & Bristle?"

ALANCO



and a kill too, or my name ain't Bill G——; but hustle, man, hustle, and get home to clean yourself, for I want ye to go up to London by the eleven o'clock train to fetch summut from Leadenhall Market.'

The above conversation, between a certain hard-riding Essex farmer and his bailiff, took place some years ago, on the eve of a run with one of the Essex packs, a run that will be remembered for many a long year by the followers of the hounds in question, and the story of G——'s fox is still told by those who took part in that famous hunt.

Farmer G——, one of the right sort of yeomen, was well known throughout the county as a fine horseman and a dead shot, and the little ten-acre covert situate on the outside boundary of his well-tilled farm invariably proved a sure find for a fox. The worthy yeoman boasted that the wood had not been 'drawn blank' for over twenty years; but twenty years is a far-away cry, and I am bound to confess I 'hae me doots.' Anyhow, on the day preceding the run I am about to tell of, G—— sent his bailiff, Tim Head, down to N—— Bushes to see if the earth harboured a fox, and to the discomfort of the farmer, Tim returned with the report that the drain had not been occupied for at least a week; but, as my yarn will presently show, G—— determined that the local pack of hounds should have a run by fair means or foul the next day.

I happened at the time to be staying with an old friend of mine who resided within a short distance of G——'s homestead, and upon the morning appointed for the hounds to meet at N—— Bushes, my host and myself had taken our guns out before daybreak for the morning flight of the duck as they travelled from their nightly feeding-grounds inland to the Main and Blockwater estuary, and were returning with a solitary mallard, when we saw Farmer G—— hurrying along a footpath which led across the field to his homestead, as though his Satanic Majesty was behind him, and as he approached nearer we discovered that he was splashed with mud from head to foot, his coat and breeches torn in many places, and his face was scratched and bleeding as though he had been dragged through a Leicestershire bullfinch. G—— did not appear to notice our approach until we were within a few yards of him, and I thought he looked particularly sheepish as he hurried past with a 'Morning, gentlemen, morning; just been to look at my fat beasts up in forty acres.'

'What the devil has G—— been up to?' asked my host when the yeoman was out of hearing; adding, 'if I didn't know him well I should have imagined he had been on a poaching expedition.'

'Or robbing a fishmonger's shop,' returned I. 'Didn't you notice the tails of either bloaters or red herrings sticking out of his coat pocket?'

'Oh, that accounts for the milk in the cocoanut; G—— has been making a night of it with one of his neighbours, for I remember hearing him remark some time ago that there was nothing to touch a 'soldier' for 'hot coppers;' but Lord, how he must have hugged the hedges on his way home to get into such a deuce of a pickle.'

A covey of partridges passed over our heads, and the tattered yeoman was forgotten, for a leash of the little brown birds fell to our four barrels, and one with a wing down gave us a lively sprint across a heavy ploughed field before he was gathered, and then my companion and myself returned to the Manor House to breakfast.

It was a glorious hunting morning, such as would have gladdened the heart of poor Whyte-Melville, and at least three hundred people of all sorts and conditions attended the meet of the —— Hounds at the cross-roads near N—— Bushes; amongst them G—— very smart in cords and a bird's-eye stock, mounted on a good-looking and well-bred chestnut.

Hounds had not been in covert many minutes when a whimper from old Venus was taken up by the full chorus of the pack, and in less time than it takes to write it, the dappled beauties were out of covert and racing across a big grass-field; but strangely enough, not one of the score or so of men who were waiting outside the covert, within a few yards of the spot where the fox should have broken, had viewed him away, nor was the soul-stirring cry of 'Tally ho! gone away, gone away!' heard from any part of the wood; but there was no time to comment upon such a detail, for hounds were carrying a breast-high scent, and were heading for a lovely line of country.

G—— was one of the first men over the big bank and newly cleaned ditch which had to be negotiated before the first grass-field was entered, and quickly following in the yeoman's wake rode the M.F.H. huntsman and perhaps thirty of the field, for the preliminary jump was a bit of a 'snorter,' and a convenient lane afforded excellent going to the 'tailor' and cockney sports-

men and sportswomen, from which classes the field on that particular day was largely recruited, for the meet was within easy reach of London, and it was Yuletide, and therefore holiday time.

The pace was a 'clinker,' and the going was all that could be desired, and a finer line of country it would have been hard to find in the corn-growing county of Essex.

'Yonder's a double with a big drop, and there be a brook on the far side,' shouted G——, *pro bono*, as he pointed with his crop towards a stiff bullfinch ahead, so high that it was impossible to see what lay beyond. 'Swish,' and old Kitty bored her way through the thorn fence, and dropped, cat-like, at least six feet into the lane below; then a stride and a half, another cat-like scramble on the part of the old Irish mare I was riding, bang through a denser and thornier bullfinch than before, and I found myself, minus a hat, and with face scored like the back of a Christmas sucking-pig, safely over the double, but with a wide, rotten-banked brook yawning twenty strides ahead; but Kitty, an old 'chaser,' knew her business as well as she loved it, and with a snort and a toss of her fiddle-head she put on full steam, and flew the obstacle with a good six feet to spare; but the man on my right (a well-known sporting medico, who rode not an ounce over eight stone) was not so fortunate, for, although his clever little thoroughbred landed on the right side of the brook, the bank caved in, and she fell into the muddy water with a broken back.

Having ascertained that the doctor was unhurt, I sat down to ride again, for so fast was the pace that hounds were running almost mute. The brook safely crossed, all was then plain sailing over lovely springy turf and easy banks and ditches.

Gad, how the hounds flew! and such a head did they carry that the proverbial sheet would have almost covered them. But was there ever such a silent hunt, hardly a note of music from the dappled darlings, and never a cheer nor a hallo had been heard from the time they were put into covert thirty-five minutes ago.

By Jove, what a horrible purler did G—— get! for his mount pecked at a little bit of a bank, and then turned a complete somersault, shooting his rider out of the saddle like a bag of nails; but the farmer knew how to fall, and in a very few moments was in the saddle again, and sailing away in the wake of the hounds.

'Forrard, Kitty!' was the cry of encouragement as my mount began to show unmistakable signs of 'bellows to mend,' a complaint in which she was not singular, for thirty-five minutes at steeplechase speed without a check will make the soundest horse ever foaled blow a bit.

'Ah! hounds have turned left-handed, and head towards B——'s farm, which lay but a short half-mile ahead, and in a few minutes they come to a dead stop in the stock-yard, utterly at fault, for, although the huntsman made both a forward and backward cast, they seemed quite unable to puzzle out another inch of the scent.

A buxom woman suddenly appeared on the scene with the word 'distress' written large upon her comely features, and, walking up to the M.F.H., opened thus: 'Oh, sir, that drunken varmint, Bob, forgot to take the fox Master Gardiner sent over last night out of the bag, and this marning, when my good man loosed him in the stock-yard, as Muster tode him to, the poor critter was that stiff and bad he could hardly crawl, and so we put him in a pail of warm water, but it didn't seem to do him much good! You will find him in the granary, but I do hope you won't give him to the dogs.'

To the granary we went in a body, and there, surely enough, curled up in a corner, was a wet, bedraggled object, which bore some sort of resemblance to a fox.

'First time I ever see a fox sweating in the coat,' remarked the grinning huntsman as he stirred up the miserable animal with his crop; 'and, by God! it is the first time during my ten years of mastership that I have hunted a d——d red herring with a half-drowned 'bagman' at the end of it. Where is G——? hang him!'

'Gone to look at his fat beasts, sir,' I suggested.
And so he had.

NOTES ON NOVELTIES.



UTHBERT BRADLEY, whose writings and illustrations of polo are well known, has recently completed a capital set of four subjects depicting incidents of the game. These have been published as coloured prints by Messrs. Fores, of Piccadilly, under the titles of *Back-*

hander, Gallop, Turn, and Ride Him Off, and should appeal to all adherents of this thrilling pursuit.

THE same firm is issuing a set of four scenes illustrative of last year's Grand National, when Grudon won in the well-remembered snow-storm. Mr. Beer, who is responsible for the drawings, has made the most of this opportunity of commemorating the celebrated race with the artistic effect which the exceptional atmospheric conditions naturally lent to the treatment of the subject, the result being more pleasant to look upon as pictures than we imagine it was to those who assisted at the actual event.

'ARD PATRICK' is the subject of the latest addition to Messrs. Fores's portrait gallery of equine celebrities, and Mr. Havell has painted excellent likenesses of the Derby winner and his jockey. Reproduced in colour, it is uniform with the portraits of Volodyvoski, Diamond Jubilee, and others by the same artist.

'PIGEON' is the title given by Messrs. Finch Mason and C. C. Welman to their new sporting game lately produced by Mr. F. H. Ayres, 111 Aldersgate Street, E.C. An international pigeon match is supposed to be in progress—the guns (eight in number) being of different nationalities—English, French, American, and so on. These can be backed by the assembled punters, at odds varying according to the space set aside for each on the disc. The 'bird' which revolves round the disc of course flies for his banker, and can only be backed with his consent. To introduce Hurlingham into the drawing room in itself constitutes a novelty, and as such, 'Pigeon' should quickly fly into the affections of all lovers of a lively after-dinner game.

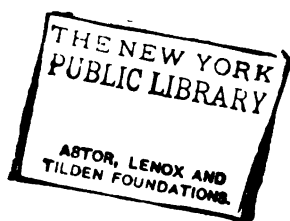
AMANG THE HEATHER, by our talented contributor, Maurice Noel (Treherne & Co.), is a charmingly written book that will delight lovers of Scottish sport, whether it be deer-stalking, grouse, ptarmigan, or black-game shooting, while devotees of the rod will revel among the stirring incidents connected with the capture of the lordly salmon. A waft from the heather

seems to accompany the vivid descriptions of the glorious scenery of Highland lochs and mountains, and quite appetite-provoking are the accounts of luncheons, either on shore or on board the little steam yacht. Should the reader be asked if the love stories (so unusually free from sobs, sighs, and tears) which run through the book be detrimental, we feel certain the answer would be emphatically, NO !

FOR those desirous of taking lessons in riding Mr. D. F. Hannay's new riding school at Eyre Arms, St. John's Wood, affords every facility for acquiring and practising the art, not only in the school itself, furnished as it is with every accommodation, but in the beautiful district of Hampstead and neighbourhood. For our young people, indeed, nothing is more delightful than a canter over the glorious Heath under the careful supervision of such past masters and mistresses of riding as Mr. and Mrs. Hannay.



"He was again headed"



FORES'S SPORTING NOTES AND SKETCHES.

WARM WANDERINGS.

By KIRILY HARE.



WRITER whose name I forget, and should probably misspell if I did remember it, told of a people who passed their lives fighting with griffins in the dark. Griffins, being tangible, could be caught hold of and slaughtered—for all I know to the contrary. But the Indian collection of insects in our hut on Ometepc could neither be seen nor captured. They were simply sets of teeth and stings, invisible and ubiquitous, and bloodthirsty as vampires.

'Gassy' Long, Timothy Saggars, and myself were evicted out of our beds earlier than the earliest bird. Grumbling we donned our clothes, lit our pipes, and wandered out into the darkness. The boom of bull-frogs and the occasional scream of a nightbird was all that broke the silence. Then dawn began to streak the east, and presently the crater-peaks blushed rosy and purple, like coloured lamps in a black sky, suspended in glowing radiance high above our heads. Quickly the light glided down the mountain, tinting the soft foliage of the trees with prismatic colour. Then up flashed the sun, and the native young ladies began to prepare breakfast.

Around us stretched Nicaragua, like a sunny sea of silver, studded with many-hued island-peaks crowned with the fleecy mists of dawn. But calm and smiling as its face may be, no water, salt or fresh, is more dangerous to sailors. It has a land and a sea breeze, storms, cyclones, and sudden rushes of wind, which, gathering behind the high lands of Chontales and the peaks of Monbacho, Madera, and Ometepc, sweep down

on the lake with sudden and terrible violence. No change of sky or temperature gives warning. From a clear and sunny heaven down swoops the blast, and within five minutes the spotted sharks may be butting each other over the struggling bodies of an overturned boat's crew.

Smarting, itching, and grumbling, we strolled back along the sandy village street, shadowed by great grey trees, till we came to the wild-pineapple fence surrounding the clay-floored compound in which stood our hut. Palm-thatched and embowered in a mass of flowering creepers, that insectiverous hades looked outwardly a perfect paradise. In the little cookhouse adjoining the hut were sundry merry young girls getting our breakfast ready, beating tortillas between their hands and slapping them upon the hot baking-stones; and there came to our nostrils a savoury smell as of frying fish. And in due course, on a table shadowed by calabash-trees and slender palms, we did justice to the tropical banquet.

'It ain't nowise onpleasant outside,' observed Mr. Timothy Saggars at the end of the repast, as he leaned back in his chair and elevated his eyes thankfully towards heaven, 'but them little creeper-crawlers an' hoppers as pervades the inside is mighty onpleasant to us white humans. Couldn't them sorter animals be made friends with, same as you made friends wi' that there foreign rhinoceros, sir?' he asked, bringing his smiling eyes to bear upon grave-faced Gassy.

'Any animal big enough to have brains can be made friends with and tamed, from an elephant down to a mouse, if you know how to do it,' responded Gassy, as he filled and lighted his post-prandial pipe.

'Do 'ee allow as a wild lion in his native country, out where you said how-d'ye-do to that tremendous rhinoceros, is a animal as has got much sense?'

'Well,' replied the Gassy One, after a sharp glance at each of our faces, 'I'll tell you what I've seen a lion do, and leave you to judge of his sense. I had gone in on a hunt some two or three hundred miles north-east of Capetown, and was told by a Kaffir that there was a family of lions within a few miles of my camp. Off I went, and found them located in a cave at the edge of a lot of rocks, just about sunset, when the he-lion would be enjoying his last nap before getting up and going out to fetch the family supper. From my hiding-place, at the edge of the forest which overlooked the rocks, I watched the arched

opening with my night-glass till the sun was well down and eagles flew screaming overhead. Then the lioness came out, and took a squint at the sky to see what the weather was like. Back she shambled into the cave, woke up her snoring husband, and hustled him out, and ——'

'I allow as that night-glass wer' a mighty powerful weepion,' murmured Timothy. Gassy simply scowled and went on with his yarn, and Timothy placidly puffed his pipe.

'The lion came half out, yawning till the cavernous mouth seemed as if it would never close again. Suddenly it shut with a snap, and the lion shot out bodily. He had received a vigorous hint from his hungry wife to be quick, just as he was thinking of another yawn; and the rude interruption seemed to provoke his majesty, for he sprang round and snapped. Then he trotted quickly down between the rocks, and my Kaffir followed in his wake, and I followed the Kaffir till I lost sight of him. A few minutes later came a plaintive wail, like the cry of an infant with acute stomach-ache, straight ahead of me. It was my leader's signal—the cry of a young crocodile—by which it had been arranged he was to direct me. Thus we progressed, mile after mile, till a faint wail, full of mortal anguish, sounded within a few dozen yards of me, and I knew we were close to the lion's quarry. On the top of a high wooded bank I found my Kaffir seated, and, on the veldt just beyond, saw a large herd of cattle. The lion was going round them, gradually getting the herd into a smaller circle. Close on our right was a narrow gap, and the old bulls passed up to that part of the ring which faced it, with the evident intention of making a stampede through. Had they once started, not a hundred lions could have stopped them; the lions would simply have been gored and stamped to death in the attempt. The only chance therefore was to check the movement before it got to the starting-point, if such was possible.'

'Couldn't you have shot the lion?' I asked, seeing that Gassy had paused for breath.

'P'raps that 'ere night-glass wasn't not loaded,' observed Timothy. 'There were a man to Libertad as slew a alligator wi' a glass bottle. He wer' a clever chemistry sorter philosopher, and loaded the bottle wi' a chemical dose o' suthin' wi' a long wire as come'd out through the cork. The alligator swallowed the bottle same as if 'twere a pill, and the chemistry man fired off what he said wer' a 'lectrical bat'ry, an' the alligator sorter

turned hisself inside out, an' I manufactured a pair o' boots outen the hide o' the deceased reptile's hind legs.'

'Of course I could have killed the lion,' said Gassy in answer to my question. 'I had a double-barrel loaded with hardened bullets, and my Kaffir carried its fellow. But I wanted to see the lion's full proceedings, for this reason: The owner of the cattle had accused the Kaffirs of stealing several head, and had imprisoned one of the supposed thieves. The Kaffirs declared that a lion took them, tho' no sign of any struggle could ever be found. Lion-spoor was plain enough around the herd, and, if he took them, the question was how was it there was no sign of the beasts having been killed and dragged away? That was what I wanted to solve, and a live lion had to solve it. So I lay low and watched.'

'Ah, now I understand,' I said, 'and am curious to hear how the lion could possibly have managed it.'

'Well, the herd had got itself massed into as dense a body as could be formed. At first the animals were huddled together anyhow, heads and tails in all directions. But at some signal—probably some variation in the leader's stamping—every head was turned in the same direction, towards where the oldest bulls stood facing the gap, which was some sixty yards from their front. Every head was raised above the back of the beast before it, and, inch by inch, the animals crept up closer to each other, till the column was a solid mass, ready to make its rush. Then, round the right-hand angle, the lion stalked to the front. For a moment he stood facing the corner bull, at a distance of some eight or ten yards, staring at it fixedly. Slowly and sidelong he then moved in front of the next, and so continued along the whole front line. As if suddenly petrified, with body drawn back upon slanting forelegs, each beast stood rigid and fixed, glaring with horror-stricken eyes, while wreaths of vapour curled above the distended nostrils. In just the same manner as before the lion now worked the line from left to right, but stopping twice as long in front of the centre leader, patriarch of the herd. When back at the right-hand corner his majesty lifted his head and gave the loudest roar I ever heard, and then another a trifle louder. He had chosen his victim, a fine fat young bull, just the sort of meat that suited his wife and family. Drawing back about a yard the lion gave the earth a mighty stroke with his right paw, waited half a minute, whacked the ground again, roared like thunder, drew back

another yard and glared at the juicy young bull steadily. The chosen one started a step forward, and back again. The lion crouched as though about to spring, and so waited. Slowly, with timid hesitation, the bull moved one foot forward a short step, and the other foot followed tottering suit. Another feeble step, and the lion gently rose and took two steps back, followed by the bull. The lion now slipped to one side, leaving the way to the gap clear, banged the ground with his paw, and gave a curious sort of bark.'

'Same as a big yaller dorg,' murmured Timothy.

'The bull darted forward,' went on Gassy, 'and bounded through the gap, followed by the lion. The cattle, still in an agony of sweat, gradually began to recover their senses, but the leader still kept his position. Some of the young bulls grew impatient, but a poke from the horn of some sedate cow taught them to obey orders. At length the leader moved a step forward, and stood listening. He stamped his feet; other bulls did the same, and immediately afterwards all the heads were pointed towards the patriarch as he wheeled round the angle of the column, and thence dashed at a mad gallop across the veldt away from the gap, through which had gone the lion.

'Now, to follow the lion and that juicy young bull, and so read the riddle to the end. But my Kaffir was sound asleep. Little he recked of the unfortunate animal so meekly surrendered by that blockheaded herd, or of the tortures the victim was enduring in his present drive to death. "Schnapps!" said I in the sleeping one's ear, and a wide-awake semi-savage jumped up and stood before me, licking his lips. A dram was administered, a second one asked and refused, and ten minutes later we again got sight of the lion. And the moon was now well up.

'The best-trained colley that ever put teeth in wool couldn't have worked an errant sheep back to the fold better than that lion drove home his reluctant victim, and it was no easy task. The bull was a lusty young fellow, with no fancy for being driven. He dodged with much persistency, and bolted from the line of march whenever he thought he saw a chance; but the power of the lion in stopping him was wonderful. When the bull made a sweep in the form of an arc, and looked like escaping, the lion did not put himself greatly out of the way. His eyes were always on his prey, and, almost as the intention was formed, he seemed to know exactly what was coming. And then, with his body close to the

ground and nose almost touching it, taking short but astonishingly quick steps, he would shoot off obliquely to the nearest point of the art and head the bull each time unerringly. When he met him he made no noise, and used no force or violence of any kind. It seemed quite sufficient that their eyes should meet to render the poor bull helpless—to make him feel that he *must* turn—that he *must* pursue the course indicated to him, in order to avoid the gaze which he couldn't bear to encounter. That was how it appeared to me.'

'I allow as the transmogrifying power o' the human eye be a most curious circumstance,' observed Mr. Saggars, as Gassy came to a momentary halt.

'This was the eye of a lion,' I said.

'Well, sir, a eye is a eye, anyhow,' returned Timothy. 'There wer' a man to Libertad as had a eye——'

'Once and once only,' resumed Gassy, 'did the bull appear likely to escape. He had been ascending an inclined plane of about a mile in length, at the top of which was a lake. When the lion bore away to the right to make his quarry turn to the left, the road to the family den, the bull plunged into the water and swam off straight across it. If the lion meant to head him off this time, he would have to hurry himself; and he did. Bounding away at racing pace he scudded along the bank, and got round just in time to meet him at the landing-place. And when the bull swam to another point, where he hoped to land, he was again headed. After many efforts of a similar nature, all equally unavailing, their eyes must have met, for the bull became suddenly motionless; and then we heard the heavy stroke of the lion's paw upon the earth. It was repeated twice, and the dripping bull unresistingly walked ashore, the lion drawing back to induce him to land, then going on one side to leave the way open, and, when the bull went ahead, slipping behind him and continuing the drive just as quietly as before. I could easily have followed the lion round the lake and shot him, and the Kaffir begged me to do so, whether out of sympathy with the victim or because he begrudged the lion so much good beef I do not know. What he said was :

'"Baas kill lion, moosch blenty coo eat. Lion eat coo, moosch tam bat. Moosch blenty eat iz tam goot."

'If the lion were killed here, we might have difficulty with the lioness; we might not be able to draw her out of the den; this I told my too eager Kaffir, so the drive continued. After

his failure at the lake, the bull made no effort to escape ; he seemed to resign himself to his fate, which, to his instincts, must have been a fearful one. No longer resisting, he hung his head droopingly, moving on listlessly in whatever direction his grim driver intimated. Arrived at the foot of the boulders, the lion gave a roar that almost shook the rocks themselves, and the hapless victim fell upon his knees, from which he with difficulty arose to stand quivering with terror. He had scarcely risen when the lioness rushed out to the opening at the head of the boulders, in haste to view the spoil to be laid at her feet. The sight of another enemy in front of him caused the bull to shrink backwards, but a roar from the foe behind brought him up again sharp. He stood tottering, uttering moans so despairing, so acutely expressive of his agony, that I could stand it no longer. Whispering to the Kaffir to be ready to hand me my second rifle, I crept up to the boulders a few yards in rear of the lion, and luckily well to leeward.

‘The lioness had not moved from the spot where she stopped first to look on the prey, and I could see the glare of her eyes between the ear-tips of her mate. Gently sliding my rifle-muzzle across the boulder-top and taking careful aim, I sent a two-ounce bullet into the lion’s brain, and then plugged the lioness between her glaring eyes. She gave a leap, then fell down among the boulders, kicking, struggling, fighting at the huge stones and sending them rolling, and sending forth such frightful yells that she woke up the eagles. Out they flew from the rocks, screaming ; out flew vultures, shrieking ; and the unearthly concert became quite deafening.

“‘Baas moosch big praaphet,’ said the Kaffir. “Baas kill lion self—kill touzan lion—moosch goot—moosch brave—moosch wice—moosch big praaphet Baas iz, eh?”

‘The lion was lying as though asleep, with head resting on his fore-paws, stone dead. Another bullet settled the lioness. When the bull caught sight of his dead foes, and comprehended that they were powerless to harm him, he walked feebly past the dead bodies to my side, and stood panting, with heaving flanks and drooping head ; and when we returned to my camp, that juicy young bull followed us as tamely as a pet dog, in fear seemingly that every bush was a lion.’

‘So you solved the riddle satisfactorily, eh?’ said I.

‘The lion did,’ returned Gassy, who seemed slightly out of breath, and had let his pipe go out.

'An' was they native Kaffirs acquitted?' asked Timothy.

'The one in prison was pardoned.'

'But ef he didn't commit no crime—ef he hadn't a-stole not no cattle—wot wer' he pardoned of?'

'If he isn't dead you might go to Africa and find out; he was a middle-aged man when it happened, about twenty years ago,' said Gassy, who had a great aversion to explaining anything, especially anything incredible.

Mr. Timothy Saggars smiled a milk-and-watery smile, and closed his lips over his pipe-stem. He was one of those men who, if it were possible, would never quarrel with any one; but possessed of that quiet courage peculiar to the Western men, stamped into their very nature by long generations of warfare with wild beasts and savage Indians. In all that makes a *man*, barring brain-power, Timothy was one of nature's noblemen, though far removed from a Society hero. More punctilious than Bayard as to the point of honour, taught in no school and from no pulpit, he honoured weakness, if naught else; and that is the last lesson of gentle life in Europe, and very few are they who master it. And, for all the strange wildness of his language, I never heard friend Timothy utter a foul word.

'It don't seem ezactly nat'ral,' he now meekly observed, 'as how the Lord 'ud require a 'Merican man fer to do His work out to Africa. Leastwise, it ain't been so revealed to me, sir, not as yet. I reckon the work to hand ez fer to go an' jest prospect' around thet thar cave fer to rekiver my gun. The wind ablowed it outen my hand jest afore I wer' blew into that thar toomultuous torrent as nigh drowned ov me.'

'If that jaguar happens to be at home, and comes out to interview you, you might find yourself in a tight fix,' I observed. 'It would be better if we went with you.'

'Right you are, boss,' said Gassy; 'I'll fetch out the guns.'

Leaving the native ladies cleaning cooking-pots with stones and sand, making noise enough for a stage thunderstorm, we strolled away through orchards and flowers into the quiet forest, and, after a slow climb up the mountain-side, came out opposite the cave, and sat down to regain breath. The rushing torrent of yesterday was again but a gentle stream, sparkling along in the dip which lay just half-way between us and the mouth of the cave. Just outside the cave's mouth was a wild pig, a remarkably fine old boar, giving self-satisfied little grunts as it rooted up tit-bits with its great flexible snout.

'Shall I pot the beggar?' I asked.

'Blaze away!' answered Gassy.

I was slowly bringing up my rifle when, from out the cave, crouching stealthily along the ground, there came a jaguar—a three-parts-grown young male. Piggy raised his snout, gave a loud grunt, and stood stock still, facing the enemy. The tiger, bristling with rage, showing gleaming fangs through drawn-back lips, uttered a loud roar. Piggy tossed his head and grunted a grunt of wrathful defiance, to the evident surprise of the tiger, an inexperienced youngster.

'Don't shoot,' whispered Gassy; 'let's see the fun.'

Thinking, possibly, that the ineffectiveness of the previous roar must have been caused by some defect of utterance, the jaguar set to work afresh, and roared till the welkin rattled. He had evidently been accustomed to have his voice attended to, and now to see a mere pig simply wag its ugly little tail and snort impudent defiance was not to be borne. So he went for that pig, wonderingly, with much circumspection, and crawled around the porcine Tartar, trying to take him in flank and so avoid those long razor-like tusks. With every movement of his lithe and powerful foe, the boar slightly shifted front, keeping a defiant snout ever straight-pointed at the other's face. Stiffly stood up the bristles on his massive neck, while the wedge-shaped head was poised at just the right height for effective use of those eight-inch rippers. And no swordsman can cut right and left so swiftly and surely as an experienced old boar with his curving razor-edged tusks.

Thus circling and shifting, the antagonists had worked away from the cave, nearer to the stream and to us, from whom they were now not more than about ninety yards. The jaguar, crouching almost to the ground, with his sinewy limbs well under him, suddenly sprang upon the boar and buried his claws in piggy's neck, trying to bring his hind claws into play upon piggy's face, and failing to accomplish it.

'I don't allow as thet thar tiger have a-fought ary a pig before,' remarked Mr. Saggars. 'He've a-bin an' a-doodid of hisself right away.'

Under the jaguar's chest the boar's powerful head worked for all it was worth. With lightning-quick upward cuts, piggy slit open all the flesh he could reach, till his foe let go his hold and banged piggy across the eyes with his right paw. It was a mighty slap in the face, and made the boar stagger. Blood

poured from both—from the jaguar's gashed chest, and from piggy's slashed face and clawed neck, from which two great flaps of torn flesh and skin hung dangling. The boar's tail no longer wagged, and that of the jaguar waved with limp indecision. They had both got more than they expected, and appeared to be about equally troubled in their minds. But the boar was a brave old fighter, and now charged his foe full tilt. The jaguar sprang, and, with his hind claws, laid open piggy's back as he passed over it. Round twisted the boar, and charged the other as he landed, got right in under him from the rear as he sprawled weakly on the ground, and ripped open all his interior economy. Then piggy lay down for a rest, head to foe, and whetted his tusks defiantly.

'And the Book saith,' murmured Timothy, "'The lion shall lay down aside the lamb.'" But it don't seem as how the tiger's agoin' to lay down aside the pig, not comfortable——'

'He'll lie down *outside* the pig presently, if we leave them alone,' said Gassy, in the same low tone of voice.

'There don't seem no sense in it,' went on Mr. Saggars. Why wasn't they friends an' lived comfortable aside each other? It don't seem not natural for——'

'But that's just what it *is*,' cut in Gassy. 'It's Nature's way of doing things. Creation is a bloody system of wholesale carnage, its creatures endowed with instincts and instruments for one brutal purpose — that the strong should prey upon the weak. Battle and death is the universal law. In this rough-and-tumble world the weak *must* go to the wall, or into the stomachs of the strong. The poetry of Nature is mostly sentimental bosh. That the nightingale is a model husband singing to his beloved mate, is just such fiction as that which represents the robin as a tender-hearted creature living upon breadcrumbs. The cock nightingale sings because he feels rampageous. "Come out!" he cries to a rival he hears hidden away in the dusk. "Come out! come out here! Here! here! Come here! Come out! Come here!"—a pretty trill, but not a blooming love-song. The world is a bloody battleground; 'tisn't Arcadie.'

'Then,' said I, 'how grateful we ought to be for Nature's beneficent training. She shows us how reckless slaughter can be accomplished wholesale; and how well the work is done we are told by one of her leading students:—"More fatal than Carrier's are the Noyades of Nature; her fire-damp than

Borgia's poison-cup; her pestilence than human artillery; and the Reign of Terror can, on occasion, be overmatched by an earthquake." Therefore, naturally, we humbly follow the providential example set us. Were we not built on lines for the special purpose? As the poet tells us:—

When Nature fashioned first this jovial blade
 She pondered long when making up his heart;
 At last she said, while smiling,
 'Tis a brave heart and beguiling,
 For I've given Mars and Venus equal part.
 Then she moulded massive shoulders and a neck
 Upon which she set a Martian hero's head,
 And inside it poured some whisky
 Just to keep the body frisky,
 And the skull she thickened 'against assault of lead.
 His mouth she hid beneath a fierce moustache,
 His eyes she made as bright as falchion's flash,
 With a nose that proves his face is
 Thus adorned by Nature's graces
 Both for warfare and for 'going on the mash.'
 So of course he loves a fight, and thinks it fun,
 And he loves the ladies fondly when they're nigh;
 But tacking *horrida* to *bella*
 Nature tells us is to tell a
 Most unnatural and suicidal lie.

Even the gentlest soul thrills responsive to the trump of war, and the frolicsome gambols of lambs are but a war-game—embryo of fights in which horns shall clash and skulls crack for "survival of the fittest." In his playground the boy hears an echo of the Field of Mars, and in every game he sees the shadow of the god of war. If Peace spread her palm over the earth the germs of chivalry would starve to death, and we should become sordid socialistic Quakers, with no excitement left but the "temporary insanity" of suicide. What do *you* think, Mr. Saggars?

Timothy smiled — a smile that suggested anthems and sunnier dawns and blanc-mange all blent into one. Then he said:—

'They'm both doodid for. I reckon we oughter finish ov'em orf out o' pain an' suffering. An' I allow I'd best git to the work to hand an' prospec' over thar fer my gun.'

So we descended the slope, jumped the stream, leaving Mr. Saggars to prospect its bank for his lost gun, while Gassy and I proceeded to give the spent duellists their *coup-de-grace*. I put a bullet into the jaguar's head, and the poor animal suffered no more pain. Gassy's first barrel missed fire, and the contents of his second he fired into the unfortunate boar's rump. Away charged piggy down the slope towards the stream, where Mr. Saggars had just discovered his gun, and was stooping to extricate it from the mud and *débris*. Blinded with blood, piggy lost his footing, somersaulted down the bottom of the slope, banged against Timothy's elevated stern, shot the astonished gentleman head first into the water, and then rolled on top of him. There was turbulent commotion in the stream for a minute or two, till the boar was slaughtered and Timothy once again dragged out, as nearly drowned as aforetime.

Ten minutes later we were seated in amongst the ten-foot-high roots of the ceiba-tree. Flower-gardens hung from its branches overhead; parrots peeped in and out of its crannies; brilliant lizards basked like living gems upon its bark; gaudy finches, butterflies of wondrous colours, and innumerable insects flitted and hovered around its parasite-clothed bole, while beneath, in shady comfort, we smoked the pipes of peace. Down below, in the small sandy nook that served as a landing-place, two or three 'bongos,' or cargo-boats of the country, rocked all unguarded upon the sunny ripples of the water. A few canoes of lighter construction lay dry upon the beach, and fragments of rude gear—broken paddle and mast and rope of bark—were strewn around.

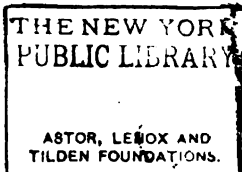
'This here,' observed Mr. Saggars, reflectively, 'ain't like backwoods, not much. There ain't not no solemnity o' silence, nor no laberinth o' naked tree-trunks, nor no twilight-glimmer to noonday. This here's what I calls a dreamy sorter scenery o' sunny life, wi' parrots a-chucklin' an' monkeys a-chat'rin', an' birds an' butterflies a-flashin', an'——'

'And jaguars and pigs and frogs and fleas and mosquitoes,' cut in the prosaic and unsentimental Gassy, 'and Jabberwocks and Jimmiwicks and Woggerlies and other plaguey monsters, visible and invisible.'

'Mebbe it ain't not no way impressive on the narves, like as backwoods is,' went on imperturbable Timothy, 'but thar's suthin in it as makes a man feel sorter religious; anyways, them's my notions, sir.'



see page 237.



'*Tityre, tu patulæ, &c.,*' I murmured.

'Bless you, Timothy!' growled Gassy. 'You're a milk-and-water poet, and ought to be a dissenting minister. Why don't you cross yourself at sight of every daisy and fern-frond? A forest is just a forest, and isn't a flower savannah. A tree is a tree, and isn't a missionary; and a cock sparrow isn't a sacred spirit; and the backwoods ain't a religious edifice. St. Patrick converted his Irish heathen by showing them a shamrock; but devil a soul will you save nowadays by the exhibition of all the trees that grow, and all the mountains that tower, with all the fowls of the air and fishes of the sea thrown in.'

'There wer' a good man at Metagalpa,' said Timothy, as once invited me for to go for a walk 'pon the sand-dunes. So I goes. An' it wer' all sand. So I says, "'Taint not nuthin' but sand, sir." Says he, "'Aint ther' Heaven up above? Can't yer see it? Ef yer can't see it, it ain't not no fault o' Heaven's, nor yet o' the sand's.'"

'Well, anyhow,' said Gassy, 'I can't see that Jimmiwick Tree with the Woggerly Bird on top of it, that you yarn'd about. Just you show me that blooming lot and I'll become a believing Christian on the spot. Just now, I'm blessed hungry and vote we have luncheon, so produce the prog-basket.'

It was now the hottest hour of the day. A tropical sun—sincerest of natural phenomena—blazed overhead as we picnicked in that rustic shelter of ceiba-roots, massive shafts of twisted wood ten feet high, roofed by the mighty tree itself full forty feet in girth, towering like some tall lighthouse two hundred feet above us. Below, palm-plumes hung drooping above gentle wavelets that lapped the sandy margin of the lake, which gleamed like molten silver, painful to the eye. Heat-haze quivered and wavered to and fro, and the canoe mat-coverings crackled and warped and swelled upwards. From where we sat, excepting the tawny back of a shark basking in broiling sun-rays, no living thing was to be seen; and, save in the neighbourhood of our lunch-devouring jaws, the silence of midday heat now reigned supreme. Faint draughts of air moved through our rooty summer-house, keeping it tolerably cool; and when we had emptied the prog-basket, lit our pipes, and Timothy commenced soothing exhortations on the beauty of high-toned Truth, Gassy and I went comfortably to sleep.

Suddenly we were awakened by a tremendous 'Bang!' and saw that some of the interlaced root-roof had cracked about half

a foot apart. Timothy's oration ended abruptly, and from out that summer-house there started an all-four race of three perspiring picnickers. It was warm work, and—

By all the Life that ripples through the everlasting Hills
 And all the Death that trickles through the patent picture Pills ;
 By Calabash and Ceiba-tree, by Pumpkin-squash and Palm ;
 By Woggerly and Jimmiwick of Tim's poetic Yarn,
 If Gassy's Snore and my Encore and Tim's orated Thunder
 Didn't mix such blasting Trio that the roof was rent asunder,
 I'd like to know *what* caused the Crack
 That banged the welkin with that Smack
 Which made the trio-snorting Pack
 Up stick and skip a bee-line Track on hands-and-knees from under !

TURF NOMENCLATURE.

By FINCH MASON.



WHAT have our racehorses done that they shouldn't have better names given to them, than, more often than not, seems to be the case at the present time ? 'What's in a name ?' will doubtless be the retort of many a matter-of-fact owner. With these, however, the writer is not in accord ; on the contrary, in common with a good many more, he is distinctly of opinion that in turf nomenclature a good name is half the battle.

'Frinstance,' as my esteemed friend Nathaniel Gubbins would say, 'why all these names with "II." tacked on to the end of them ?—Ambush II. and Cap and Bells II., for example—so frequently to be met with in the *Racing Calendar* of to-day ?'

Does it point to a lack of originality in the owner's composition, or can it be that it is too great a strain on his mental powers to attempt to go one better ? Just fancy how odd it would look if, supposing a man took unto himself, as is not unfrequently the case, a second, or even a third wife, his new acquisition were to figure on his race—I beg pardon—visiting card as Mrs. Brown II., or Mrs. Jones III., as the case may be !

A good many years ago now—though it seems but the other day—a horse called Speculum, belonging, if I remember rightly, to the late Duke of Newcastle, came to a very short price for the

Derby, and on paper he looked to have a chance second to none. A friend of the writer who only backed 'em as a rule, turned round for once in a way, and laid against Speculum for all he was worth, declaring that a horse with such a name could not win the Derby. Neither did he, though the Duke's colt had a good try for it, coming in third, if my memory serves me.

What is the meaning of Speculum? Ask your doctor the next time he pays you a visit—he'll tell you, and probably inquire at the same time what you want to know for.

Another friend of mine took a similar dislike to Friar's Balsam, because he said he hated being reminded of ointment and things.

It is all in favour of my argument that the classic races—the Derby especially—are invariably won by an animal bearing a name worthy of the occasion. Were I to make an exception it would be that of Volodyovski, which somehow always seemed to grate harshly upon one's ear when borne upon the breeze.

Floriform, in the same year, on the contrary, sounded all over like a Derby winner, and many a superstitious punter went 'solid' for Mr. Jay's horse in consequence.

Sir Joseph Hawley, Lord Falmouth, and Mr. Merry, who stand out by themselves as *the* racehorse owners par excellence of the past century, one and all christened their horses not only with a view to effect, but in the best possible taste.

Who could resist such names as Beadsman and Bluegown, Rosicrucian and Greensleeves, or Kingcraft and Silvio, Wheel of Fortune and Janette, or Thormanby and Dundee, Doncaster and Marie Stuart? It would have been criminal to have done so.

Scotch names are always popular, and moreover have been associated with some of our most famous racehorses: notably, Caller Ou, Blair Athol, Breadalbane, Broomielaw, Macgregor, Rob Roy, and Bonnie Jean. What winning names, too, were Caractus, Kettledrum, Macaroni, Lord Lyon, Cremorne, Hermit, Bend Or, and—best of all—Wild Dayrell, the special fancy, according to the 'Druid' of all the London footmen, though why he doesn't state!

'Wild Night Again' hardly strikes one as a good name for a racehorse; at the same time it is not quite so trying to the nerves as some of those invented by the late Lord George Bentinck, for his horses must have been to the sensitive race-goer of that period, of which 'There He Goes With His Eye Out' and 'The Devil To Pay,' were fair specimens.

The present owner of the Magpie jacket, goes on quite a different tack, and a more appropriate name for the best, and certainly the most popular horse in England at the present time than William the Third could not well be.

Needless to observe, the simpler the name of the horse, the better the ring like it, whilst they sternly discountenance anything of a foreign nature, such as L'Abbesse de Jouarre, or Volodyovski, for instance. It is on record that they were once so puzzled as to how to pronounce Ilione, that some of the fraternity, when shouting the odds against the celebrated mare of that name, in order that there should be no mistake about it, were accustomed to bawl out, 'Now then, I'll lay against Iliōne or Ilione!'

The question as to which was right and which was wrong produced a great deal of controversy at the time, and no one apparently being in a position to give a positive opinion on the subject, it suddenly occurred to Lord Winchilsea, at that period a shining light in the racing world, that any one armed with the opinion of an expert in such matters, might very easily turn his knowledge to account with great profit to himself. Accordingly, when racing was over for the day at one of the autumnal meetings at Newmarket, he chartered a carriage, and without saying a word to a soul, drove quietly off to Cambridge with a view to putting the question to a learned Don of his acquaintance—none other, indeed, than the Regius Professor of Greek at the University—whose decision, as none knew better than himself, would be quite indisputable.

Thus appealed to, the Oracle spake. It was neither Iliōne or Ilione, he said, but Iliōné.

Having got all the information he wanted, away went my Lord back to Newmarket as fast as two horses could take him. It is hardly necessary to add that the very next time Ilione's name, and how to pronounce it, came upon the *tapis*, Lord Winchilsea's betting-book took a very prominent part in the discussion.

Its noble owner, indeed, was generally credited with having landed a large sum of money in bets, as a result of his clandestine visit to the Cambridge Professor in the pursuit of knowledge.

Some of the racing colours, too, in use just now are quite on a par with the names of the horses who carry them. 'Khaki,' for instance, however useful it may be, and doubtless

is, in an enemy's country, where the object of the wearer is to make himself as little conspicuous as possible, is hardly the colour one would choose for a racing jacket when the very opposite is the desired effect.

'Paisley,' too, though highly becoming when adorning the shoulders of an elderly lady in form of a shawl, looks quite out of place on those of a jockey.

'Copper,' again, is suggestive of its owner being like the Mayor of Eatonswill, in the 'nail and sarspan' business. It only wants the addition of tin sleeves and cap to make the thing complete.

Then there's the Union Jack of old England we are all so proud of, and never tired of seeing fluttering in the breeze from the top of the flagstaff—if from one which has just previously been adorned by a flag of a different nationality, so much the better. The dear old flag's most ardent admirers must, however, I think, admit, that it loses all its charm—looks vulgar, in fact—when fluttering down the course on the back of a jockey of the period.

The white jacket, black sleeves and cap, of the Duke of Portland, and the black, yellow collar and cuffs, of Lord Farquahar, may be best described as neat and workmanlike; but in the writer's humble opinion no colours to be seen on the turf at the present time can compare, for brightness and prettiness, with the familiar pink satin jacket and black velvet cap of Prince Soltykoff.

THE HUNTER SIRE OF THE FUTURE.

By 'SNAFFLE,'

Author of 'The Roedeer,' &c.

THE hunter sire of the past, and, indeed, the hunter sire of the present, was, and is, the English thoroughbred. This is an axiom that few will be found to dispute, though there have been some brilliant exceptions. Of the former there have been numerous famous Irish horses, the best, perhaps, being Tom Steele. After all this horse was very nearly thoroughbred, and this was probably the case with most of them. At the present day we have the Hunter

Stud-book Horse, such as Sir Walter Gilbey's Merry Match-maker and Ballymena. I do not know whether these horses get much patronage, but of their class I shall have occasion to speak presently.

Nevertheless, when a man has wanted, or now does want, to breed a hunter, he almost invariably takes his mare to a thoroughbred horse. The reason that he had formerly for doing so was that the thoroughbred was an animal of speed, courage, and substance. The reason that he does so now are, firstly, the traditions of the past ; and, secondly, the fact that he does not know where else to go. 'Come to us,' says the advocates of the Stud-book Hunter, 'and we will give you a horse nearly thoroughbred, with more substance.' Unfortunately, however, there is an uncertain element about the animal. It may be three-quarters, or fifteen-sixteenths, thoroughbred, that is, of a fixed type, but the fraction that is not goes off, if it were possible to trace it, which it is usually not, to some uncertain quality—a strain of cart-horse or hackney blood, perhaps—and the result is that a fixed type cannot be bred from it, in other words, you get 'misfits,' which are nobody's money. The thoroughbred, on the other hand, is, as everybody knows, a fairly constant type. One foal may prove more or less sound, fast, good-tempered, or well-shaped than another ; but we know, generally speaking, what we are going to get when we breed from two thoroughbreds, as we do from two shires, or any two animals of a constant type.

The trouble of the hunter-breeder, as regards the thoroughbred, is that he is getting more and more of a racing machine. Forcing of yearlings, short-distance racing, the use of notoriously unsound sires, and other reasons are given by various writers, but this is the fundamental one, that the objects of thoroughbred-breeders and hunter-breeders are diverging more daily. The former wants, of course, *in theory*, soundness, temper, and staying powers, as well as speed ; so does the latter. But the *real* object of the former is to get high prices for his yearlings ; and all these things are, therefore, secondary—and a long way secondary—to the use of fashionable stallions and fashionably-bred mares. Now, unfortunately, it seems the fact that these fashionable animals are not those which (in the shape, of course, of their less successful progeny, from a racing point of view) turn out useful hunter sires. Of course, there are exceptions. For instance, I take it that there is no more fashionable strain than that of the great Hermit. Yet several of the Hermits have proved good

hunter sires, amongst them Ascetic and Astrologer, though perhaps, their stock seldom can be said to give one 'a pleasant ride.'

'In all cross-breeding the sound principle is to choose your foundation stock of mares of some definite and well-established breed, and to mate them with a stallion of a breed as definite.' These are golden words, written by Mr. W. S. Blunt; and it is from the neglect of the first part of his advice that most breeders come to grief. The old hunter mare may be three-parts thoroughbred, and as good as ever looked through a bridle; but she will not, therefore, necessarily ever have a foal up to troop-horse standard. (I am assuming that the essential precaution of breeding from her once when young has not been neglected, for no old mare will ever breed good ones if this is omitted.) Yet it has always seemed to me that this is exactly the absolutely essential point that is overlooked by the Hunter Stud-book people. Therefore, I must discard their stallions, bred on present lines, from my list of hunter stallions of the future.

Now, although, as I have shown, the modern thoroughbred is receding constantly from the position he once occupied as the ideal hunter sire, it would be idle to suppose that there are not at present plenty of thoroughbred stallions well adapted for the purpose, and, indeed, so used. 'Travelling, as I do, much in the summer season in the South of England, I am constantly struck by the weedy character of the thoroughbred stallions I meet on the roads. They are, most of them, stilted weeds; their height, however, commends them to the farmers, who fancy that by using a stallion of sixteen hands, they will get, at any rate, a big foal, and so a saleable one. I believe there is nothing more fallacious.' Mr. Blunt again; and I say 'ditto to Mr. Blunt.' But better judges than the farmer make this mistake.

One of the nicest hunter sires I saw, during the season of 1901, when he was standing in Ireland, was refused a Queen's Premium because he was too small—15' 1½, I believe. This horse was a model of what a short-legged, active, thirteen-stone hunter should be; and I haven't the least doubt his stock, by good-sized mares, would all be taller than himself. I will give his name, as I think he is one of those that should be noted by breeders. It is Trillion, by Plebian, out of Union. Sire and dam both have a double dash of Touchstone blood, and the latter (United's dam, was she not?) has, through her dam, the somewhat rare strain of (Newminster and Stockwell combined

in) Nye Gau. A thoroughbred could, I suppose, hardly be less fashionably bred, though he saw the light at the Yardley Stud. I regret to say I have lost sight of this horse, who was twelve years old and absolutely sound.

A dozen years hence shall we be able to put our hands on such another? I believe not, and therefore I think that we shall be obliged to look out betimes and breed hunter sires of our own. Mr. W. S. Blunt found that by taking sires and dams of two definite and fixed types, he could breed a fixed type. A somewhat heavy carriage horse was what he aimed at; and he got it from the Arab sire and Suffolk cart-horse mare. In a similar way, I believe, we can breed hunters—but not, of course, from cart-horse mares. Of light mares, we have in England three fixed types: Hackneys, Cleveland Bays, and Yorkshire Coach-horses. The former I dislike, but I do not discard it for that reason, but because it has been tried, and unsuccessfully. I am open to correction on this point, but personally I have never known or even heard of a good hunter with any appreciable amount of hackney blood in his veins.

The Yorkshire Coach-horse is a breed eminently worthy of the attention of hunter-breeders, in fact, Mr. T. White, the Secretary of the Society that looks after this breed, tells me that 'a great many of the best hunters bred in Yorkshire, especially in the North and East Ridings, are descended from the Coach-horse crossed with the thoroughbred.' In colour these mares are bay with black points. They stand over sixteen hands, for which reason I pick those that lack inches from the breeder's point of view. Of course, I do not mean that they should be in any other respect small. The points aimed at are 'fine head, good length of neck, shoulders sloping well back, strong loins, lengthy quarters, good shoulder and hock action, sound feet, flat legs, with plenty of bone and muscle.' Here I again quote a letter from Mr. White. I do not see what more we can look for in a hunter brood-mare, especially considering the fixity of type in this breed. Nor can quality be wanting in horses which can trace their blood, as these can, to the Darley Arabian (1700), Jalap (1758), Ruler (1777), and many others of equally blue blood. Still, I would not call the result of the first cross a desirable hunter sire, but I think the second should be. To this I shall come directly; I should just like to quote Mr. White once more, he says:

'You will see that by judicious crossing of the thoroughbred

with the stronger country mares of good colour, the breeders have been able to produce horses of good colour, with size, bone, and quality, and that the breed has for a long time been thoroughly established.'

I now come to Cleveland Bays, and here again I have to thank the Secretary of the Society, Mr. T. Curry, jun., for valuable information. These horses are descended from the old chapman's pack-horse, and, in general detail, correspond so much to the Yorkshire coach-horse that I think little but actual experience could show which of the two breeds is the best adapted for hunter-breeding. Clevelands have one advantage in conformation over coach-horses in that their hocks are lower set, that is they have more length from hip to hock. They have one bad point in their back-ribs, but I dare say it will be found possible enough to breed this out. This, and want of depth through the heart, are the two great drawbacks, from a hunter-breeder's point of view, to all our harness breeds; and this is, in my opinion, the reason why, when we do get a true-shaped one from the second cross, that pony blood is so valuable in hunters. I mean that ponies are so wonderfully good in *body*. Unfortunately, our rare old pony breeds show the stain of the hackney more each year.

This is what the President of the Cleveland Bay Horse Society has to say about their points, in kind answer to my questions as to those most important of hunter-breeders:—'Height 16 to 16½ hands, well-laid shoulders, flat and clean hocks, well sprung and deep back ribs, sound and open feet.' Mr. A. E. Pease, M.P., has also kindly answered, as follows: '16 hands for mares, and 16.1 for stallions; shoulders high at withers, and very muscular; strong and bony hocks; back ribs generally rather weak, owing to length of body; feet large and open.'

I am tempted to add my own description, written before these reached me: 'The colour is constant—in itself an advantage to the breeder; it is a good roomy animal, not perhaps very deep through the heart, or typical about the back-ribs, but with good shoulders and hocks. It is, perhaps, rather unnecessarily tall, nothing, I believe, under 16 hands being aimed at. Clevelands have little, if any, recent admixture of thoroughbred blood.'

There is a third breed, not unworthy, in my opinion, of our attention, as not only being an absolutely constant and very suitable type, but one that has been formed with a view to saddle, rather than harness, work. I allude to the Trakhenen

breed, which has been bred for years, with the greatest care, in East Prussia, and has a great deal of our thoroughbred blood in it. Mr. Wrench remarked that they seemed to him rather long in the back, but otherwise he was loud in their praise. There will, perhaps, be a difficulty in inducing our English farmers to use a sire bred from German mares, although he must know pretty well where our own best mares are gone, and perhaps, also, that infinite care is paid to the breeding of half-bred horses in that country by the Government, which, as we all know, is not the case here, where they are left to the public spirit of individuals.

Fortunately, the necessity does not yet arise for us to look beyond our own island for foundation stock for hunters. Still, the matter is not one which can much longer be neglected. The first thing to consider is : What are the true principles of breeding ? Mr. Wm. Day, in *The Horse*, says : ' I think it is of small moment how the sire of hunters has been bred, for all thoroughbreds are well bred enough for the purpose of getting hunters '—which is true enough. But are hereditary disease, temper, staying powers, to go for nothing ? Mr. Day only regards shape and size ; but how if, as I think, shape and size are daily harder to get in the thoroughbred—I mean, of course, from the hunter sire point of view ? Mr. Day goes on to say that his plan for breeding hunters is this : ' After hunting a mare a few seasons and finding she was good, I should have her put to the horse. . . . She might be expected to breed eight or ten foals as good as herself.' Why ? In my opinion a mare selected simply because she is a good hunter is just as likely to breed eight or ten ' misfits.' Mr. Day's receipt for breeding weight-carrying hunters is to cross a ' strong, well-bred carriage mare ' with a strong, thoroughbred horse. If the mare be not bred to a constant type, another ' misfit ' will be the probable result.

Now, my theory, and it is one which I should be prepared to put into practice, is that a number of mares of fixed type, Yorkshire Coach Horse or Cleveland Bays, should be selected and put to picked short-legged thoroughbred stallions, such as the one I have already mentioned. The resulting fillies I should put to a similar but not closely related thoroughbred ; and then I should try the stallions of this second cross as hunter sires. I need hardly observe that during the interval—about ten years—between the commencement of this scheme and the production of a stallion fit for service, we should have ample opportunity of

trying the geldings of the first cross as hunters. These I should expect to find lacking in quality for this purpose, though readily saleable animals for what Mr. Jorrocks calls 'the minor fields of 'oss henterprize.'

The advantage of a scheme of this kind is that it is capable of absolute control. A sire so bred can be crossed back to either of the parent breeds ; and the thing can be varied to suit the requirements of any particular locality. Moreover, *at present*, there is no great difficulty in obtaining the necessary stallions and mares to make a commencement with.

THE LOCUST SPRING RACES.

By M. N. BARRY.

THERE are two things that can't be beaten : Virginia girls and Virginia hunters. If you feel inclined to doubt this statement, go there as I did, and you'll change your mind. The first time I stopped with Tom Randolph at his Virginia home, it was for shooting (which was a farce), but I had the best fox-hunt of my life, and the following spring, when I visited him, I saw some very novel races. There always seems to be something going on there, but I had enough excitement that time to last me a long while.

Tom met me at the station in an old buggy with a cracked top from which the paint had nearly disappeared. The nickel was all worn from the harness, which was tied together in places by bits of string, and the blinkers flopped out at right angles with the cheek-straps. Every bolt in the buggy rattled, and one of the wheels wobbled alarmingly. It was drawn by a sun-burned mare with a young foal at heel. She was a rough-looking animal ; her mane fell on both sides of her neck in tangled wisps, and the outline of a saddle was plainly marked in dry sweat on her back ; her long tail constantly whisked over the reins, and she was blind in one eye.

The road was neither level nor smooth, and I recognised the same gullies I had bumped over in the winter. There were the

same broken panels in the fences, with an occasional abortive attempt to mend them with brush.

'Good mare, that,' Tom finally remarked; 'she is seventeen years old, and her legs are as clean as the day she was foaled.'

'She seems a stout, useful animal,' I answered, in the tone of a connoisseur. 'And the foal will, no doubt, make you a good draught-horse, some day.'

I am not a good judge of a horse in the rough, and confess I never could tell one foal from another, but I thought this a safe guess.

Tom glanced at me out of the corner of his eye to see if I was serious.

'Lord, man!' he laughed, 'that mare was one of the best-known race-horses of her day in the South, and several of her colts have won big stakes. That foal,' he added casually, 'is booked for the Futurity.'

We rattled on over the rough road, while my heart was in my mouth to see the prospective Futurity winner, with his little bush of a tail not two inches in front of the wheel, as he trotted at the side of his dam.

Some three miles from the station we stopped at a tumble-down shanty, and Tom raised that megaphone-like voice of his and shouted, 'Oaahh, George!' Whereat, from a cabin at the edge of a wood about a quarter of a mile away, appeared a lad.

'Where's your father?' called Tom.

'Ploughin',' answered the urchin after the question had been twice repeated.

'Tell him I want a horse shod,' and Tom climbed out and opened the gate while I drove to the door of the shanty, which, it seems, was the smithy.

The colt, however, refused to come through the gate, but ran wildly up and down the road nickering shrilly, while the old mare whinnied anxiously.

'You'll have to tie her, and come out here and help me head him off,' Tom finally called. I obediently descended, and for some ten minutes chased up and down the muddy road, while that silly colt dashed wildly forward and back, refusing to see the open gate.

If it requires brains to win the Futurity, Tom had just as well scratch his entry.

At last, the colt saved the situation by jumping the stone wall, which stood a good five inches above his withers, when he rushed to his mother with pathetic little sobbing nickers, doubtless making a woeful tale of our cruelty in keeping him from her.

Well, if he fails in the Futurity, he is a sure tip for the Grand National.

By this time the smith had arrived, leaving his horse to the plough, and after another half-hour the shoe had been fitted to and nailed on the mare. Tom gave the blacksmith a dime, and he returned to his work.

'Does it really cost but ten cents a shoe?' I asked astonished.

'For this kind it does,' Tom answered. 'I buy the shoes for the farm horses by the hundred pounds, so it amounts to about fifty cents to have a horse shod all round, but the hunters have to be done more carefully, and they wear steel shoes. It's seventy-five cents a month for them,' he added in an aggrieved tone, 'and that mounts up, you know.'

I thought of my shoeing bills and groaned.

At last we reached the house, where about fifteen foxhounds, two terriers, and an old retriever surrounded the buggy, baying and yelping delightedly, and then we went in to dinner, which they have at noon.

Tom's sister was at home, and I at once fell in love with her, for she is the sweetest little thing I ever saw. She made me feel as if I were the whole ticket, and I thought at first I could run the show to suit myself, but that was where I didn't know Virginia girls.

It seemed there were two others, and she was just using me as a pace-maker; when it came to real work, I wasn't in the running—was left at the post. It was a pretty hot thing between those other two, however, and I got a good deal of amusement out of the situation.

When I had been there about a week, Tom came in one morning, greatly excited, to say there were going to be some races, two days later, in the next county at 'Locust Spring' his cousin James Fairfax's place. 'I'll enter Mystic for the high jump,' he said; 'and we can all go to Aunt Patty's place for a couple of nights.'

So the next day we started: Tom's sister and I in the old buggy, while he and the rival lovers rode the horses they were to enter in the races.

Miss Randolph was very quiet, and I saw had something on her mind, but one gets pretty intimate with a girl before the end of a fifty-mile drive, and she confided to me her troubles. It seems she was in a quandary over the two men. 'For, I like them both,' she said, 'and I can't decide which I ought to marry. When I am with Will Gray I think he is the only man in the world, but when Blair Lee talks to me, I can't see how I ever thought of his rival. I am just as unhappy as I can be, and I don't know what to do.'

'Well, but why not solve the difficulty by marrying some one else—me, for instance?' I suggested tentatively.

'Don't be silly. I am in earnest,' she said, then after a pause, 'I wish things hadn't changed so. When mother was my age she had the same experience. She couldn't decide, so the men settled it between themselves; they fought a duel.'

I gasped.

'Oh, not with pistols!' she explained, as if that made it all right, 'with broadswords. Father is the best man in America with a sword, so he won mother, and the other man went away as they had agreed. He soon married, and'—she hesitated and blushed—'Blair is his son,' she added.

Romance isn't dead, you see, in Virginia.

'Then, why not marry Blair?' I suggested, 'and right an old wrong.'

'It wasn't wrong,' the girl protested vigorously, 'and I wish customs hadn't changed as they have, so that men can't settle their troubles themselves, but leave all the burden on the woman's shoulders.'

I have heard a good deal about woman's rights, but this was to me a novel point of view.

'Well,' I said, 'why not let them ride for your hand in this race to-morrow? That would save scandal, settle the question, and bestow the laurels on the best man.'

Miss Randolph was very quiet for some minutes, and I thought she was displeased, but, as usual, I had underestimated the sporting spirit of the Virginians.

'Yes,' she said slowly at length; 'that would be fair. They are both thorough-bred, and though Red Raven is the better fencer, Tally-ho is steadier. It would be an even and a fair thing.' She drew a long breath. 'Thank you!' she added simply, and laid her hand a moment on my arm, looking straight at me from those long-lashed eyes.

I was knocked all of a heap ; first, because my joke was taken seriously, and then because—well, the Virginia women have the loveliest eyes and voices in the world.

We reached 'Aunt Patty's' at sunset, and, though the arrival of five unexpected visitors might annoy or flurry some persons, we received a most cordial welcome.

As her stable was not large, her own horses were turned in the field for the night to make room for ours, and the family 'doubled up' in order to give us their rooms.

The house was one of those old Virginia homes ; once a fine place with well-kept lawn and trimmed box-hedges, but to-day, in its dilapidation, a mute witness to the struggles, the privations, and the poverty that the Civil War laid upon the people. Their troubles had, however, in no way impaired their hospitality, and we were made to feel that our coming was an honour.

The mixture of grandeur and penury I found most interesting. Valuable old paintings and engravings hung on walls from which the paper was peeling ; meals (the corn-pone, fried chicken, beaten biscuit, fried apples, and other typical Virginian dishes) were served on rich old Sheffield plate, bent and battered with age, whilst home-made blackberry wine was the only beverage—beside spring water—but it sparkled in heavy old cut-glass. Where a cup or tumbler had been broken, it was replaced by the cheapest and crudest of modern pottery or pressed glass, and where a Chippendale chair had lost a leg, a stiff modern abomination of the ninety-eight cent. variety took its place.

They made no apologies, for they gave their best.

The first race was supposed to be at ten o'clock the next morning, but, though I was impatient to be off, we did not start till after that hour. All along the road we passed people going to the races ; here an old countryman with a farm wagon, in which were his large family with their lunch-baskets ; there, a smart tandem ; while ancient buggies, washed clean for the occasion, held bashful swains and pretty country maidens. Now we would pass a woman in an old-fashioned scoop-saddle, holding a faded cotton umbrella over her head, an urchin of some five years riding behind her, his tiny legs hardly reaching beyond the broad hips of the huge Percheron. Presently, a group of country boys would dash by us in a cloud of dust, while shouts of encouragement followed them from those they passed. They were the owners of starters in the coming races,

and were having fitful trials. Once we passed a lean mare hitched to a light spring wagon, in which were a burly farmer and his family.

'Hello,' Tom called, 'aren't you going to enter Lady Guardsman?'

'Yes, *sir*,' answered the farmer, and added, proudly, 'She ain't tasted an oat this spring.'

'She looks pretty hard,' said Tom, with a twinkle in his eye, as he rode alongside of her; 'been excersing much?'

'Wal!' answered the farmer, entering into the humour of the situation, 'she hauled wood all the winter on days when she wasn't fox-hunting, and then she done the ploughin'; but she ain't had any *real* exercise!'

Lady Guardsman, it seemed, was a popular idol, for she performed her humble duties well, and then would jump five feet in the show-ring, and she never made a touch.

We finally reached Mr. Fairfax's place, and found that neither flags nor hurdles had been put out, though one man was cutting bush and another erecting posts for the day's events. No one seemed surprised at the delay; many moved about speaking to friends and acquaintances from a distance, admiring various specimens of horse-flesh, or discussing the crops, the cut-worm, or the weather.

The farm had been loaned for the event, and there was no gate-money charged. Mr. Fairfax had a large barrel of cider placed near the hitching-rail, with a gourd for dipping it out, and he went about among the crowd shaking hands with equals and inferiors alke, and asking his friends into his house for a drink. His supply seemed as inexhaustible as his hospitality; but after I had swallowed a mint julep and a glass of apple brandy, I declined all further offers, to the amazement of my friends, who must have heads like cannon-balls to stand those Virginia drinks, unquestionably the stiffest I ever struck, and enough to knock out an ox.

Several young men, under whose auspices the races were given, went about asking others if they wanted to enter their horses, and, upon a reply in the affirmative, collected two dollars (which was the amount charged as entrance fee in each race) for a sweepstake.

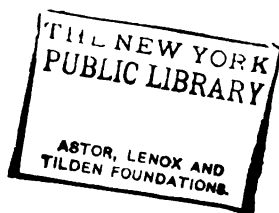
The programme consisted of a race on the flat, a hurdle-race, a steeplechase, and a high jumping contest.

For the first of these there were five starters, but twice that



Close behind the flying, riderless chestnut

see page 280.



number accompanied the contestants, yelling directions, jeering, and swearing jocosely. The distance was about half a mile along a farm road that curved on the easiest grade through the big field in front of Mr. Fairfax's house.

They asked me to judge, and when I hesitated to accept so responsible a position, Tom said, 'Oh, you can do it all right! It isn't necessary to know all the fine points of the National Steeplechase and Hunt Association rules; just decide for the horse that comes in first, and they'll be satisfied. These farmers never intend to foul, and wouldn't understand if a man claimed such a thing; it's a matter of every man for himself.'

The horses were not restless, so Tom succeeded in getting the bunch away at the first trial. They started like a whirlwind—outriders and all—every mother's son of them whipping with all the strength of his good left arm (the reins were, as is usual with them, in the right hand) and yelling at his horse or neighbour. The crowd cheered delightedly, and Bedlam reigned.

Helter-skelter they went round the curves of the road; with a mighty splash through a shallow brook, and finished in a bunch amid great laughter, as some of the outriders had beaten the last two of the racers.

I was in a predicament, for I couldn't, if my life had depended on it, have told which horse in that bunch finished first, and I hated to funk on my maiden effort as judge. But I found I was little needed, as all the contestants knew who had won, and there was much hand-shaking and friendly raillery.

I then decided that I preferred to be starter, since I couldn't act as judge, so Mr. Fairfax and a 'summer boarder' named Hobbs (a man from Boston, whom I strongly suspected to be some one's coachman, so markedly cockney he was) consented to fill that post of honour. They needed three judges for the high jump, however, and as that required no starter, I promised to resume my position for that event.

The course for the next race was twice around the field, over some six brush-and-rail hurdles placed at varying distances apart, and so loosely constructed that the first round laid them low. The only formidable object was the brook, the banks of which were steep where it was not crossed by the road, and here three horses came to grief, to the great delight of the crowd.

This race, like the first, was won by a raw-boned brown horse, with a head like a barrel.

The steeplechase was a different thing. The course had been picked by Mr. Fairfax, and was over a fair country, with big, solid stone walls, post and rails, and the inevitable snake-fence to be considered. A red flag fluttered at each fence, a bright blot on the landscape, and the panels selected were neither low nor weak.

There was a long delay before the horses finally came to the post, and it told on the nerves of at least two persons. Will Gray was keeping his restless little bay moving up and down, but the hunter was no more nervous than his owner, who finally went up to Miss Randolph and asked, with a smile that seemed to crack his stiffened face: 'Won't you wish me luck, Miss Nan?'

'May the best horse win!' she answered, smiling as serenely as if her whole future did not depend on the result.

Gray moved off, and a moment later Lee came towards her with his reins over his arm; he stopped and shook hands with the man who had won the former race, but I could see he was fully as nervous as his rival; his face was a grey white, and his lips were colourless.

'Won't you say a good word to Tally-ho?' he asked in a husky voice, but she only patted the chestnut neck of the thoroughbred in silence, and I, watching her narrowly, knew—what *she* had not guessed till this minute—which horse she wanted to win.

Gray joined them. 'You've put me off a good many times, Nan,' he said in a low tense tone, 'and played fast and loose as suited your whim, but this is to be final. I would like to hear you say it before Lee: you'll marry the winner of this race.'

I was uncomfortable at overhearing this conversation, but I had already taken my place, flag in hand, and two of the starters were in position; moreover, the trio seemed oblivious to surroundings. The girl laughed a trifle nervously.

'No, I didn't say that,' she answered, 'for if one of those men won, he might not like the arrangement—Mr. Ryan for instance, he could be sued for bigamy. But if Red Raven finishes in front I'll marry Will, and if Tally-ho passes between the finishing flags first, I will marry Blair. They are waiting for you. Go!'

Five minutes later a yell of 'They are off!' passed from

mouth to mouth, as the six stout horses flew the first flight of rails abreast.

That was the best race I ever saw. Those four farmers were game, and there was no dallying, no riding a 'waiting-race,' no steadying at their jumps; each man sat down in his saddle and from the first fence of that four-mile course, with whip and spur urged on his eager mount. Pell-mell they came at every obstacle, and what they did not get over they went through—it is wonderful what big rails those horses can splinter. Half-way round they crossed a ploughed field (not the light, sandy plough that we know, but heavy, sticky clods of good Virginia clay) and here a flea-bitten grey pulled away from the bunch.

Yells of delight arose from the spectators. 'Look at old Lightfoot! that's where she's at home; she is used to ploughin'. Go it, Charles—you'll beat them swells yet!' &c.

But it was not to be. Half-a-mile of hard galloping over a blue-grass meadow put the 'swells' some twenty yards to the good, where neck and neck they rose at an appalling wall. I held my breath, but they landed safe, dropped into their stride, and passed swiftly on towards the next fence. With a rush the four farmers hurled at the wall, the grey leading; the others strung out in line not half a length apart.

Now, a hurdle is quite unlike a fence; likewise is old timber a different obstacle from solid stone; that wall was one with which it was not wise to tamper. The grey, already pumped and hurried out of her stride, rose but half the necessary height. 'Her knees caught it square, she turned in the air, and poor Charlie came down.' The man behind was too close to stop, he landed on the prostrate animal and bit the dust. The third farmer tried to turn his mare to the left, but she rapped so badly that he only succeeded in upsetting the poor brute, and the fourth man chanced it—he couldn't do otherwise—and fell into the bunch.

It was an awful mix-up for a second, but in less time than I've taken in the telling, they were all up, wiping the mud from their eyes, or running in pursuit of their gees. None were hurt, and two had kept hold of the reins, but though they spared neither themselves nor their horses, the distance was too great ever to be made up.

Gray now cut out the running, but though Red Raven flew each fence and crossed the streams with hardly a perceptible change in his stride, he was unable to shake off his rival, who hung close, his nose at the girth of the bay.

Presently a yell went up from the crowd, 'Tally-ho's got it!' for they saw—what I had not noticed—that Red Raven was beginning to labour while the chestnut had something to spare. But, if Heaven had been the goal, Gray could not have ridden a harder race.

In the same positions they neared the field where fluttered the white flags that marked the finish, and then I saw what made my heart stop beating. If Heaven were not the goal, Will Gray was going to risk Hell to win.

The last fence was a wall with an eight-bar gate and a high hickory post on the right; about three feet from this was a gap, and towards this lower place Gray was making with Lee still racing along on the off side. The wall between the gap and the post was high, and it would be a close shave for the horses to jump this abreast, but, if Lee had pulled up, he would have lost the race. Closer they came, still bearing farther to the right, and then, when too late, Blair Lee saw his rival's game. 'Give me room, — you!' he yelled, but Gray only laughed exultantly, jumping so close to the post that his stirrup iron rang against it with a dull sound.

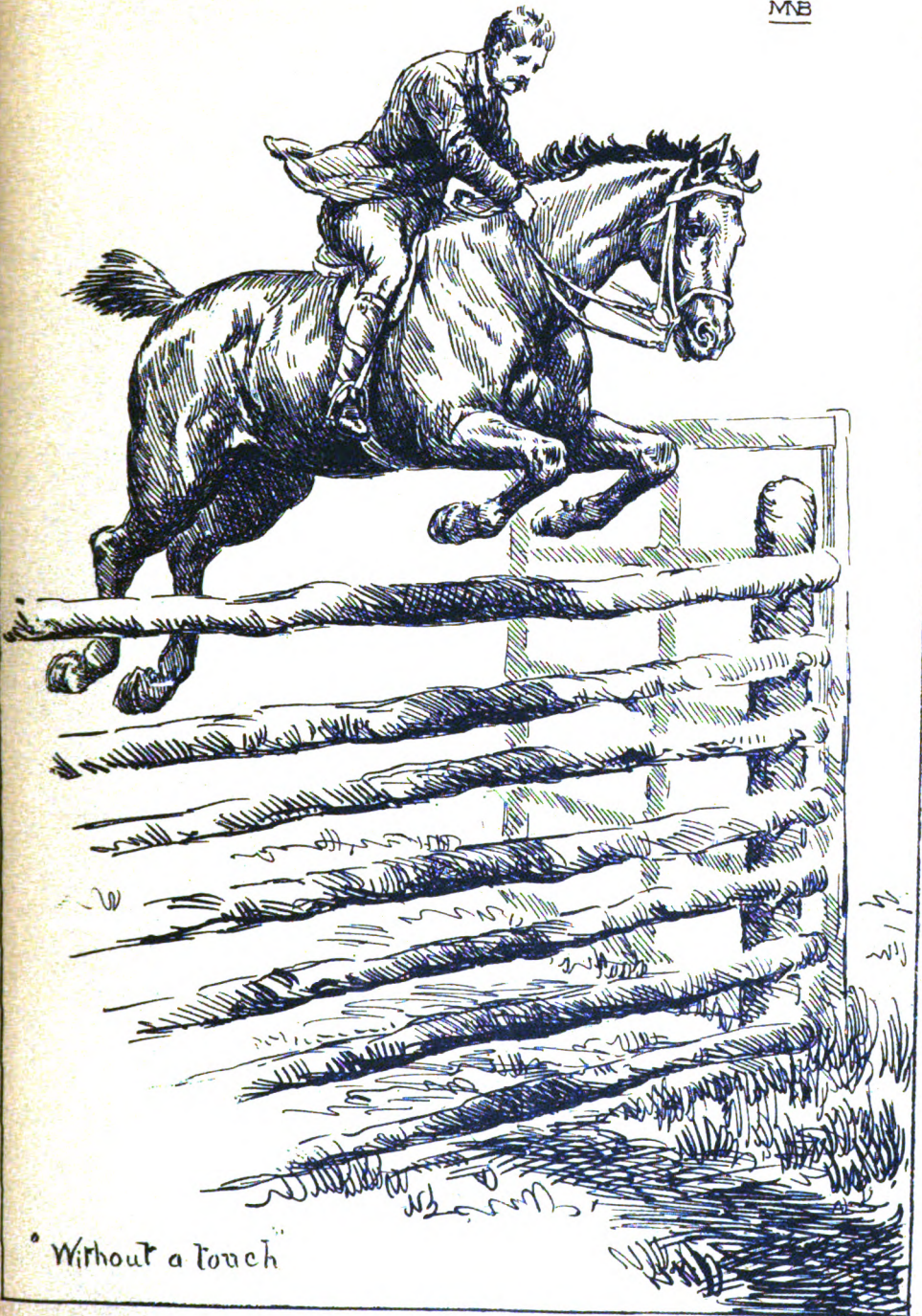
The chestnut made a mighty effort, but struck the post, and turned over, flinging Lee some twenty feet, where he lay quite still. Gray glanced back as he landed to see how his scheme had worked, and his horse pecked so badly that he slid over the animal's shoulder. He was on in a second and close behind the flying, riderless chestnut as he passed between the finishing flags.

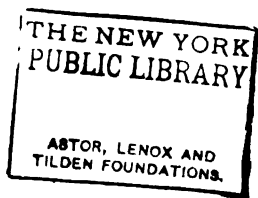
I drew a long breath, for I had never seen a dirtier piece of work.

Lee, being unconscious, made no protest, and the crowd, as Tom had warned me, took no account of a foul. 'It was a mean thing,' they said, but would have been astonished had Gray been ruled out. Mr. Fairfax understood this sentiment, I suppose, and Hobbs didn't care. At all events, Red Raven was declared the winner.

Blair Lee wasn't seriously hurt, only knocked out, but we were nearly through with the high-jumping contest before he came to. He didn't say much, just sat in the old buggy, looking very dazed and miserable till Miss Randolph joined him.

The way those horses jumped was a wonder. That old mare showed the blood of her great sire, Guardsman, for she





went four times over those five feet of poles without a touch, to the wild delight of the crowd. Hobbs had looked her over before the contest, and though he pointed out a number of faults, he offered her owner a hundred and twenty-five dollars for her, but the man wisely refused it.

The other horses jumped nearly as well, but only Blair's black thoroughbred, Mystic, showed a clean score and he made two refusals, knocking down three bars in one of them. His form was, however, so much the better that I marked him but a point below Lady Guardsman, and I found on comparing score cards that Mr. Fairfax had laid so much stress on this that he made the two horses tie, conformation did not count. But that fellow, Hobbs, had marked Mystic ten points better than the mare and, as argument proved unavailing, we had to give the decision in favour of the horse.

Well, I have never seen a crowd so mad! They yelled opprobrious epithets, shook their fists at us, and gathered in small groups, talking excitedly of the decision. I tried to appear indifferent, but was very uncomfortable, and when Tom finally sauntered up in an off-hand manner, looking casually around, but speaking in a quick whisper, I felt that the situation was really serious. 'Here, we had better pull out of this,' he exclaimed; 'float round to the stable and keep quiet till I come. I'll tell cousin Jim Fairfax and Nan that we are leaving.'

I slipped into the stable feeling quite like the hero of a dime novel, and the plot seemed to thicken when I heard a low murmur of conversation in one of the box stalls. The egoism that made me consider myself the subject, however, received a shock when a man's voice, hoarse with passion, exclaimed, 'So you *are* going back on your word? I might have known it!'

'No,' answered his companion in a cold, scornful tone, 'a Randolph has never been known to do that. We are thoroughbreds, and don't stoop to foul play. I said if Tally-ho finished first, I would marry Blair, and I am going to keep my word. I must request you, in future, not to speak to me, for the wife of Blair Lee can have nothing in common with—a scoundrel!'

The concentrated scorn in the last word made me feel that the fellow had received the full measure of his punishment.

Just then Tom entered. 'Saddle Tally-ho,' he cried, 'and we'll show 'em what thoroughbreds can do. I wouldn't take him, if he were my horse, but Blair wants to drive Nan home, so he says, you are to ride him. He is good for ten miles more,

I reckon,' he added as his eyes went fondly over the beautiful lines of the noble horse.

'That — cur, Hobbs, is making this trouble,' he went on as he threw the saddle over Mystic's back. 'He has started the report that it was you who gave me the award, because you are my friend; he claims he did his best for the mare, but that you wouldn't have it. And he says he hates to see a poor man suffer while the rich get all the prizes'—he laughed harshly. 'I'll get even with him some day. So he has given that poor fool three hundred for his mare, when she is worth twice that money.'

'He is pretty slick, isn't he?' I remarked, for the first time seeing the reason for his extraordinary decision.

'Hurry up, man,' Tom cried, 'the crowd is getting roused, and they have been drinking. We want to get away from here before there is any trouble. They think they have been cheated, for the mare's popular and so is her owner. I was going to give him the purse—that's what he really cares about—but he got ugly, so he can bear the consequences. "What is better than presence of mind in a lynching?"' he added jocosely.

My blood froze. I had seen an angry mob, and the thought of being the object of their fury was anything but tempting.

'Why, "absence of body,"' he laughed, as he sprang into the saddle. We cantered down the lane, jumped into a pasture, and then settled down to a long swinging gallop.

Tom waved his hat at the crowd, and let loose one of those unearthly yells of his. 'They'll have fleet steeds that follow,' he quoted.

That ride was something worth swinging for (though I never could make out whether Tom was serious about the lynching), but you cannot understand the wild pleasure, the exhilaration of it, for you have never galloped over a blue-grass country, with the blood leaping through your veins, a kingly-bred horse between your knees and the greensward flashing beneath the flying hoofs in the April sunshine, while each mile bears you farther from an angry mob.

Half an hour later, we were in another county, and slowed down to a walk as we climbed the mountain. On top, we paused and gazed back over the beautiful, peaceful landscape. Far below, we could hear the rattle of an approaching buggy and see the flutter of a white dress—it all looked so happy.

'God's country!' said Tom with a wave of his hand.

Well, to me, it is all beautiful, from the Maine woods to the Florida bayous, but I still think there are two things that can't be beaten—Virginia girls and Virginia hunters.'

SIR JOSEPH'S LUCK.

By EDWARD SPENCER,

Author of 'The King's Racehorses,' 'The Great Game,' &c.

IN what may be called the 'palmy' days of the Turf, few owners of racehorses were such favourites of Fortune as was Sir Joseph Hawley, whose cherry jacket was as popular with the racing public as were the 'yellow and black cap' of his contemporary, Mr. James Merry. And with the departure from this terrestrial sphere of owners of this pattern, the Turf has certainly lost much of its former attractions, and all its 'poetry.' As a modern bard sang :—

'Instead of bringing a crack to bay,
Owners seem to be scared away;
There isn't the spirit there was in the day
Of the Hawley banner of cherry.
In the time of the Russley yellow and black,
The colours which thousands love to back,
For to "go and have a cut at the crack"
Was ever the motto of Merry.'

Belonging to one of the oldest families in England, Sir Joseph in his turn succeeded to the Leybourne Grange property, in Kent, where the Hawleys had established themselves before the Conquest. He was a man of culture and great scientific acquirements; a 'bookworm' in private life; with a strong leaven of humour in his composition, and full of quaint sayings.

'What a pity P—— makes such an ass of himself!' once exclaimed a mutual friend, in referring to another well-known racing baronet, who had been 'slanging' his jockey (Alfred Day), *coram populo*, on Newmarket Heath.

'Yes,' said Sir Joseph. 'It'll take at least two more crosses to get the cotton out!'

With his racing colours registered in 1844, it was not long before Sim Templeman won the Oaks on Miami for the lucky baronet; and shortly afterwards he committed 'the egregious folly' (as his friends called it) of giving John Gully 3000 guineas for Mendicant, whose son, Beadsman, won the Derby and some 80,000*l.* in bets for his owner, and whose son's son, Blue Gown, carried off the Blue Riband ten years later. Profitable folly, this seems!

In 1848 the training establishment at Fyfield was purchased from Mr. Tom Parr for Sir Joseph Hawley and his confederate, Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Massey Stanley. The price was 3000*l.*, and as two such useful horses as Fernhill and Sponge were included in the bargain, the lucky baronet justified his name in this as in most other transactions. At Fyfield it was that Teddington, the Derby winner of 1851, was trained by Alec Taylor, after being purchased as a foal, with his dam, for 250*l.*

Never was, nor will be, more money won and lost over a Derby than in the year of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. Davies, the 'Leviathan' bookmaker, paid away 100,000*l.* on and before the settling day; gladdening the eyes of Mr. Charles Greville with a cheque for 15,000*l.* the very day after the race. To the horror and indignation of Admiral Rous—who did not hold with making extravagant presents to jockeys—Job Marson, Teddington's rider, received 2000*l.* from Sir Joseph Hawley and his confederate; and it was directly after this Derby that Davies is said to have moralised on the situation, thusly:—

'All that I can see from here,' the great bookmaker exclaimed, as he viewed the picturesque and well-wooded prospect from the ring on Epsom Downs, 'might have been mine, if I had never betted on a Derby until the day of the race.'

Nor had it been all plain sailing for Teddington beforehand. At the York Spring Meeting, the week before Epsom, a hostile demonstration from the bookmakers set in against the horse, who from 4 to 1, drifted out to 6000 to 1000, offered. Sir Joseph, who was present at York, being a man of action, took the next train to Fyfield, and soon discovered that Teddington's stable-attendant had been bribed to 'nobble' the horse. This ambitious youth shortly afterwards left the training-stable just in front of the toe of a stout shooting-boot.

For sixteen years or so, the good luck of Sir Joseph Hawley was undisturbed. And then came his 'Moscow,' in the shape of

Blue Gown. From the beginning his owner took a dislike to the horse, and this dislike culminated in the following announcement which appeared on the official notice-board, shortly before the Derby of 1868 :—

‘Sir Joseph Hawley declares to win with either Rosicrucian or Green Sleeve, in preference to Blue Gown.’

The public fancied Blue Gown ; John Wells, who was allowed his choice of mounts, elected to ride him ; and The Earl, who had only just beaten Sir Joseph’s horse at the Craven Meeting, was scratched. Yet the lucky baronet had hedged whatever money he had backed Blue Gown for, and stood to be a heavy loser by his success ; and in the ‘declaration’ it was both pique and pocket which spoke.

The Doncaster fiasco of the year before, doubtless, rankled in the mind of the author of the declaration. An easy winner of the Champagne Stakes, the previous September, Blue Gown had been disqualified through his jockey having carried too much weight. Wells, the rider in question, was no longer ‘tiny,’ nor so enthusiastic a ‘waster’ as he had been in the past. Although devoted to this master, of all others, ‘The Brusher’ (as Wells was nicknamed) had taken matters easily that morning, whilst out for a walk with George Fordham. Sir Joseph’s jockey knew himself to be overweight, and in weighing-out had endeavoured to conceal this fact by resting the toe of one boot on the floor. There was deadly rivalry between jockeys at the time, and the trick had been carefully noted by one of the northern school of riders. Consequently, disqualification followed a ready victory for the ‘cherry and black,’ whilst relations between owner and jockey were strained for a while ; but there was never a larger-hearted or more forgiving master than Sir Joseph Hawley ; and not long afterwards Wells again donned the cherry jacket, on that celebrated ‘sprinter’ of the period, Xi.

Never was there a more memorable Derby than that of 1868. As before observed, the ‘poetry’ had not then gone out of racing, and a trip to Epsom, to witness the race for the Blue Riband was regarded by the sportsman of that period as a sacred duty, a sort of Mecca pilgrimage.

‘No use for deceit or evasion,
Heart and foot take us Surreywards still,
And we bless the auspicious occasion
Which brings us again to the Hill.’

The 'vaticinations' of rhymesters, of various degrees of merit, flooded the sporting papers at Derby time. 'Principal boys' in burlesque warbled about the great event from the stage; it was the chief topic of conversation, for weeks beforehand, at Cremorne and other resorts, a nightly visit to which was *de rigueur* for young England; whilst at dear old-fashioned 'Evans's,' Harry Sidney with his topical song on 'The signs of the times in my A B C,' would shake the chandeliers.

But what made this Derby so remarkable was the simple, shameful fact that the certain winner, albeit in the fulness of health and perfectly sound, had been struck out of the race on the previous evening. To quote Shakespeare, it was 'a knavish piece of work;' and although the sport may have lost many of its attractions, its morality has most certainly improved since the 'wicked sixties.' It is no longer practicable for a firm of financiers to 'run' a distinguished nobleman as a going concern for themselves; to dictate to him the precise programme to be pursued with his racehorses; to make him a mere catspaw, for the purpose of damaging a noble sport, and defrauding the community. There was never a blacker deed perpetrated in connection with the Turf than that which was recorded in the newspapers published on Derby morning, as follows:—

'IMPORTANT SCRATCHING.—The Earl was struck out of the Derby at 7 p.m. yesterday.'

And the worst part of the matter was that nobody at all conversant with current racing matters was the least bit surprised at the news. But as 'tis ill work raking up so unsavoury a subject let us, rather, follow the fortunes of Sir Joseph in this particular race. The field included Blue Gown, ridden by Wells, Green Sleeve (James Adams), and Rosicrucian (Custance)—the Hawley trio—the Marquis of Hastings' Lady Elizabeth, who was the mount of George Fordham, and started a hot favourite at 7 to 4. She had carried all before her at two years old, but here ran a practically beaten mare from the fall of the starter's flag. Baron Meyer de Rothschild ran a couple, in Suffolk (J. Daley) and King Alfred, of whom the last-named was an 'unknown quantity,' until he won the Craven Stakes on the previous day, beating Grimston and two others. 'Shows too much daylight underneath,' was the verdict of the cognoscenti, with regard to the Baron's second string, who started at the long odds of 50 to 1, but nevertheless was the only horse to

trouble the winner in the race. King Alfred was ridden by Norman, the rider of the celebrated Stockwell years before, and formerly post-boy in the establishment of the Marquis of Exeter. 'Jockey' Norman, as he was called, was not half a bad race-rider, and during his career in that capacity had the reputation of being a first-rate 'trencherman,' and one who 'walked wasting' every day of his life.

The Duke of Newcastle had two saddled for the fray, but one of these, Pace (Aldcroft), of whom great things were expected, fell lame during the preliminary canter. The other, Speculum, had won the City and Suburban Handicap the previous month, carrying the heaviest weight ever borne by a three-year-old for the race until 1894, when Greyleg was successful with seven stone. Paul Jones, the property of the still-living Mr. George Hodgman, and the Chester Cup winner of the same year, was also in the field, as were Lord Wilton's See-saw (Maidment), who afterwards won the Cambridgeshire, Mr. Padwick's Samson (T. French), Mr. John Scott's Viscount, and an unnamed one of the eccentric Lord Glasgow.

Odds of 7 to 2 were freely taken about Blue Gown, most of whose backers had hedged their money after his defeat by The Earl in the Biennial Stakes at Newmarket; 8 to 1 was laid against Paul Jones, 10 to 1 against Suffolk, 100 to 7 Speculum, 100 to 6 Orion, 25 to 1 Green Sleeve, 30 to 1 Rosicrucian—the public by no means endorsed Sir Joseph Hawley's 'declaration'—40 to 1 each Cap-à-Pie and St. Ronan, 50 to 1 each King Alfred and Forest King, 100 to 1 each Franchise, See-saw, and Viscount.

The most marvellous feature in connection with this Derby was the almost universal ignorance which prevailed as to the deterioration of Lady Elizabeth. If ever two-year-old was 'slaughtered,' this one was; and there can be no doubt that the culmination of this crime occurred when, in October 1867, she was matched against the three-year-old Julius (who had just won the Cesarewitch) at 14 lb. less than weight-for-age. She won the match, but was thereby rendered worthless for any further racing purposes. Singularly sleepy and credible must have been the Stockbridge touts in those days; for up to the last, one and all had informed their employers that it was impossible for the mare to be beaten in the Derby. The trainer, however, knew how hopeless was her chance, as did her noble owner and one or two others; whilst Fordham's face as he

mounted the mare near the starting-post—she was not brought into the saddling-paddock—was a ‘caution.’

When, during the previous winter, Sir Joseph Hawley was informed that Blue Gown was the great fancy of the public for the Derby, he is said to have exclaimed, ‘Then they shall have a start.’ As a matter of fact, his starting was never in doubt; but his owner, for once in a way, was prejudiced. He had, for the time being, ‘a bee in his bonnet,’ and it was not the letter ‘B.’ Ten years before, he had almost made up his mind—although his trainer and jockey held opposite views—that FitzRoland, the Two Thousand winner, was better than Beadsman; but, fortunately for the lucky baronet, that opinion was altered before the Derby Day. An owner’s estimate of his horse’s capabilities is not often wrong, yet it is certain that at the settling after Blue Gown’s Epsom triumph, the cheque which Sir Joseph handed his commissioner was a very large one. The ridiculous report that Wells received the stakes, which amounted to nearly 6000*l.*, as a *douceur*, hardly needs contradicting. The same ‘tarradiddle’ had been told with regard to Daley, who won on Hermit the year before. Owners are, as a rule, most generous to their employés, but they ‘don’t do such things.’

Round Tattenham Corner came King Alfred, in strong command, and the book-makers shouted their loudest, not many having written the name of the Baron’s outsider. But half-way up the straight it was manifest that Wells, on the upper ground, was fast closing up. The old familiar cry then uprose, ‘Sir Joseph wins!’ and the judge’s verdict went to the ‘cherry and black’ by half a length, with Speculum a bad third, and St. Ronan fourth; Rosicrucian was fifth, and Lady Elizabeth in the rear rank from start to finish. Samson broke down, whilst Franchise, the hope of the house of Ailesbury, broke a leg, and was subsequently destroyed.

Not another Derby fell to the lot of the lucky baronet; although Wells, to the day of his death, declared that he won on Pero Gomez, in 1869. But the judge said otherwise, and, although it has been written that John Osborne, who was on Pretender, thought he had been ‘headed’ on the post, the celebrated Middleham trainer and ex-jockey has more than once told a different tale to the writer of this paper. In the Doncaster St. Leger the tables were turned, Pero Gomez winning cleverly, but Pretender was not then in his Epsom

form ; and this was the last classic race with which Sir Joseph Hawley was credited.

Blue Gown followed up his Derby victory by winning the Ascot Cup very easily ; he, with the only other runners, King Alfred and Speculum, being ' post entries.' Blue Gown carried the ' crusher ' of 9 stone in the Cambridgeshire of the same year, finishing second to See-saw, who carried 12 lb. less, and whom, it was said afterwards, only two riders could have got home first that day—Fordham, who rode, and his noble owner, Lord Wilton, who, in his prime, was second, as a jockey, to no professional. It was of this nobleman that Charles Sheridan wrote in his ' Chaunt of Achilles,' a poem which professed to give the views of the statue in Hyde Park on the persons who, during the year of Queen Victoria's Coronation, passed by, on their way to the Row or the Drive :—

' Next, upon switch-tailed bay with wandering eye
Attenuated Wilton canters by,
His character how difficult to know !
A compound of psalm-tunes and tally-ho ;
A forward rider, half inclined to preach,
Though less disposed to practise than to preach,
An amorous lover, with a saintly twist,
And now a jockey, now an organist.'

In March 1870, Blue Gown was sold to the Prussians for 5000*l.*—less than half the sum given for the yearling Sceptre in 1900—and the horse was subsequently consigned to the United States of America. But the gallant son of Beadsman, and hero of the most sensational Derby on record, was not destined to transmit his merits elsewhere, or improve the American breed of horses ; for in the Atlantic the stormy winds did blow, and, with seas running mountains high, it was thought advisable to commit Sir Joseph's ' cast-off ' to the waves, amidst which, battered out of shape, the good horse met his end.

Sir Joseph Hawley died on the 20th of April, 1875, in the sixty-second year of his age, and, although a very heavy bettor he was a man our Turf could ill afford to lose ; for, like Lord Falmouth—who flourished later—he usually bred his own horses, spared no pains in the selection of his stud, and did much to improve the breed of horses throughout the country.

A PLEASANT PREDICAMENT.

By GEORGE F. UNDERHILL.

N the evening of the opening day of the Cutemdown Hounds, we had foregathered at the County Club in Hangemton ; but instead of our talk being devoted to fox-hunting, we were discussing a fair acquisition to the hunt. This was a Mrs. Hugh Mellor, a widow, who had taken 'The Grange' for the season.

'Now, Major, tell us all about her, for you are the only one of us who has ever set eyes upon her.'

'In the first place, she is the widow of Hugh Mellor.'

'We guessed that.'

'Don't interrupt, or I won't say another word about her. Hugh Mellor was what is commonly termed a fine old English gentleman, who lived on his own estate, which was in some outlandish part of Yorkshire. To the surprise of all who knew him, and to the great annoyance of his nephew, he married at the ripe age of seventy-two. Luckily for the nephew, the estate was entailed ; for the old boy left his widow every farthing that it was in his power to leave her.'

'But who was she ? . Where did she come from ?'

'I can't say. I used regularly to shoot with Mellor, and two years ago went down as usual to Yorkshire at the end of August on his invitation. Mellor said that he had a surprise for me, but I only thought that he meant that birds were plentiful. You may guess my astonishment, when he introduced me to his wife. She was an excellent hostess to me during the fortnight I was there, and from that time till to-day I have never seen her.'

'But didn't the old boy vouchsafe any information about her ?'

'No ; if you had known him you wouldn't ask the question. However, I saw the nephew shortly afterwards, Johnny Biggs, as he then was ; but he changed his name to Mellor when he came into the estates.'

'What ! not Johnny Biggs, the old Oxford Blue ?' we exclaimed.

'Of course ; there's only one Johnny Biggs in England.'

‘Well, what did he say?’

‘Briefly, that he had had a tiff with his uncle, and that his uncle had threatened to marry, and had carried out the threat, with the announcement that he had no wish to see his undutiful nephew again.’

‘Johnny ought to have had the will set aside on the grounds of lunacy and undue influence,’ Macdonald, a briefless barrister, remarked.

‘Bosh!’ replied the Major, who had been on the retired list for some years, and did not consider himself too old to marry, though he had grown-up nephews. Then he bounced out of the club.

‘Mac, you’ve riled the Major, so he won’t give you an introduction to our new Venus—our beautiful, wealthy, mysterious Venus. Don’t you know by this time that the Major considers himself a lady-killer?’

‘Well, he won’t have much chance of killing Mrs. Mellor, if she always rides as she did to-day. I wonder if she will be out with the Midlandshires to-morrow!’

I should say that though Hangemton was the acknowledged centre of the Cutemdown Hunt, which hunted four days a week, we could generally put in the odd two days with the Midlandshire. According to the advertisements of the land-agents, we were within easy reach of five packs; but then ‘easy reach’ is an elastic term.

Mac and I were the only two of our set who turned up with the Midlandshire on the morrow. Nor should we have put in an appearance if we had not sent on our horses over-night, and considered it a useless expense to have done so without riding them. It was raining in torrents when we started, and we had to train across country. We were therefore surprised to see Mrs. Mellor on the Hangemton station, evidently prepared for the same destination as ourselves.

‘I shall sacrifice my smoke, and travel in the same carriage with her,’ Mac said.

I threw away my cigar. Mac seemed cross; but I took no notice, and the train steamed off with the three of us in the same compartment. I forget now how it happened, but when we arrived at the end of our journey we had broken the ice of formality, and were chatting to Mrs. Mellor, as if she were an old acquaintance. The result was that we trotted from the station to the meet together. So it happened that Mrs. Hugh

Mellor made her first appearance with the Midlandshire under the auspices of two prominent members of the Cutemdown Hunt.

The rain prevented much coffee-housing, and hounds were quickly thrown into covert.

'If you don't know the country, will you let me act as your pilot?' Mac asked, in what he intended to be an insinuating tone.

No sooner had Mrs. Mellor nodded acquiescence than hounds gave tongue, and it was soon evident that a fox had broken covert on the far side. When we got round, hounds were a good three fields ahead of us. Certainly, now was the time for Mac to show his ability as a pilot; but, unfortunately, Mrs. Mellor was in front of him, going like the proverbial bird. I was riding the best horse in my stud, but was unable to keep on terms with her. Nothing came amiss to her, and we were riding over the nastiest bit of country in Midlandshire.

'Old Mellor was a good judge of a woman, if he was seventy-two,' I muttered to myself, as I watched his widow. The field had now become spread-eagled, and there were only seven of us in it, of whom the second whipper-in was the only hunt-servant. The hounds, too, were beginning to tail; the rain had never ceased to pour, and my horse was beginning to show signs of having had enough of it. I confess that if it had not been for that habit in front of me, I should have pulled up.

'Where are we, Jim?' I shouted to the second whipper-in.

'Lord only knows, sir; but we are out of our own country, and I can't get to hounds to whip 'em off. They'll be wandering about the country all night. There can't be more than half-a-dozen hounds owning the scent now.'

At the next fence Jim's horse put him down, and Mrs. Mellor and I had it all to ourselves; but in less than three minutes I knew we must stop, for I could distinguish a big woodland, which had evidently been our fox's point from the first. Nor was I wrong, for the leading hounds went crashing in as if they were on the brush of their quarry.

'What are we to do?' Mrs. Mellor asked me as I joined her.

'I don't know, and what is worse, I don't know where we are, for we have run out of the Midlandshire country. I can't hunt the hounds alone, and my horse is done to a turn. Let me offer you my flask!'

She accepted, and returned the flask more than half empty. I took care to finish the contents.

‘I’m afraid my horse is done too.’

‘The only thing is to strike a high road, and jog on till we find a habitation of some sort, where we can get refreshment for man and beast,’ I suggested. ‘Suppose we skirt the wood to the right?’

I ought to have enjoyed that *titte-à-titte*, but in a pouring rain on a tired horse it is not easy to get up even the semblance of a flirtation, though my companion appeared to treat the adventure as a joke. At last we reached a high road, and after another three miles we came in sight of a roadside inn.

‘Now, if you’ll go in and get a warm, I’ll see if I can get some gruel for the gees and then join you,’ I said as I lifted her off her horse.

I saw our horses put into a warm stable and take their gruel, and then rejoined my fair companion. The inn was superior to the ordinary roadside establishment. There was a blazing fire in the parlour, and we were soon seated at a very excellent cold luncheon.

‘Well, this is jolly!’ exclaimed Mrs. Mellor.

‘Isn’t it? What a pity we have to turn out again. I must see how we are to get back to Hangemton.’ And I rang the bell for the waitress. It transpired that Hangemton was on the other side of Midlandshire, a good forty miles by road, and that we were more than twenty miles from where we had met in the morning. The nearest station where we could get a horse-box was six miles away, and even thence it would be three hours’ journey by train. Still, there was no alternative.

‘But if you miss the four o’clock, you won’t be able to get to Hangemton to-night,’ said the landlord.

I looked at my watch; it was a quarter to three.

‘We must leave the horses at the hotel in the town, and I’ll send my man over for them to-morrow. It would be impossible to get a horse-box and rugs within the time. Besides, you must not travel for three hours in that damp, damn’d, moistened habit.’

‘You might have omitted the “damn’d.” It reminds me of Mr. Mantalini. However, “come along,” as the actor-manager says to Arthur Roberts, when he is half-an-hour late for rehearsal, or we shall be late for the train.’

I looked at my watch; it was now three o’clock. It was a quarter past three when we were in the saddle, or rather, when I

had mounted Mrs. Mellor in the saddle. Parenthetically I may say that the new safety habits, or aprons, are excellent. They require such a lot of arrangement on the part of the attendant cavalier.

To ride six miles on tired horses, to stable the said horses at a strange hotel, to procure wraps and rugs for a lady, to walk to a station, and to take tickets, constitutes a problem which I was unable to solve in the presence of Mrs. Mellor. I might have done so in the case of her maiden aunt; but in her case it would have been cruelty to animals to have hastened them on their journey.

We arrived at the hotel as all the clocks in the town were striking four. I mention this because in a provincial town it generally takes all the clocks ten minutes in which to strike the hour. In the absence of racing, the inhabitants bet as to which clock shall start first. When I lived in a London suburb, surrounded by nine churches and chapels, I used to ask my friends to dinner on a Sunday, and we betted on the first church or chapel which started ringing. As a local inhabitant it was my duty to know the bell-ringers—and I was generally in pocket after those Sunday dinners.

‘Well, we are in for it now. No Hangemton to-night.’

‘I am afraid not,’ I replied.

‘What fun! But, Mr. Sodawinks, what are we to do?’

I had forgotten at the commencement of this story to mention that my name is Thomas Sodawinks.

‘I am afraid that you must make the best of it, and put up for the night at the local hostelry.’

‘But what will people say?’

‘That we ought to look to the comfort of our horses first, and consider the contingencies of Grundyism afterwards. Trust yourself to me, Mrs. Mellor; I’m a better liar than that cub Macdonald, though he is a barrister. You see, everybody believes me, but nobody believes him, because they think he is always trying to fake a jury. But let us stable the horses.’

There was not much difficulty about this, for the town—wild horses shall not drag the name of it from me—lived on hunting in the winter, polo in the summer, and refractory schoolboys all the year round. Having seen to the horses, I returned to see how Mrs. Mellor was running the ropes. She greeted me with the merriest smile (and a slight twinkling of left eyelid) that I had ever seen before in my life.

'I've arranged it all, Tom.'

'The deuce you have—er—er.'

'Call me "Gussie,"' she answered, *sotto voce*. Then aloud, 'My brother and I must stay here to-night, as we cannot get to Hangemton. The chamber-maid has my orders.'

'A double-bedded room!' said the fool of a waiter.

'No! two rooms!' I shouted, blushing crimson.

Mrs. Mellor seemed amused, as the waiter departed to give the order to the chamber-maid.

'Now, Tom, we have got to pose as brother and sister.'

I suggested that a brotherly kiss would cement the pose. The pose was forthwith cemented.

Gussie, by means of the chamber-maid, and I, by means of the 'boots,' or whatever other name he chose to designate himself by, got clad in something approaching to rational costume by seven o'clock, when our dinner was waiting for us. After dinner we knocked the balls about on the billiard-table, though I began to feel nervous from the fact that my opponent never required any 'rest.' Then we retired for a little quiet conversation.

'How the deuce are we to explain this?' I asked.

'I must leave that to you, Tom.'

We were now on brotherly and sisterly terms.

'But, my dear Gussie, I wish—oh—the devil—I don't know what I wish; I mean——'

'Is it necessary for you to put your arm round me?'

'Well, it is more comfortable, isn't it?'

'My dear boy—yes, I will call you "my dear boy"—why have you fallen in love with me at first sight?'

'Because you are the only woman who ever beat me to hounds yet, Gussie. You took the conceit out of me.'

'You dear boy; you were the only one who followed me, therefore, I admire you. But, Tom, you must not love me.'

'I do, and I shall.'

'Well, you can if you like me under my new name; I am Miss Biggs, sister of Johnny Biggs of that ilk. Johnny had a tiff with the old chap, who didn't know me. Guess the rest, Tom?'

'Dear old girl!'

A POLO PONY ENTERPRISE.

By CUTHBERT BRADLEY.

I.

WELL, we must have a glass over this, William!' said a smiling, red-faced farmer to his companion in the bar of the 'George and Dragon.'

'I shan't say no to that, Joseph,' replied his companion with the bird's-eye necktie.

'Your name would not be William True if you did!' continued the first speaker, summoning the barmaid. 'Here, Miss, if you please, two Scotches and a split!'

'We don't sell a 'oss a-piece every day, and so here's luck to the next deal,' remarked William, holding up his glass before draining its contents.

It was a market-day at Slowborough,' and the 'George and Dragon' was full of farmers and their belongings from the neighbouring district, who came in every week to do a little business, discuss things in general, and eat a big hot mid-day dinner at the 'farmers' ordinary.' Wool, beef, and wheat were all a slow trade, and it necessitated some pouring down of spirits to keep the spirits up.

Considerable excitement had been created amongst the fraternity by the appearance on the scene of a dapper little gentleman in riding costume, who had gone the round of the inn stables and picked out some half-dozen cob ponies from the collection, for which he had promptly bid coin of the realm. The purchases included the animals between the shafts of the market-carts of William and Joseph, whom we have left comfortably settled in the bar-parlour of the inn, pouring out libations to the goddess of fortune.

'I knowed the gentleman when I see him,' said Joseph. 'He came out hunting the day we met at Caxton Gibbet, and he rode hounds clean off the line, had a cut at Brampton Brook, and the huntsman wasn't half sorry when he got in.'

'Ah, I remember it, and I wouldn't have give him a penny for his hat when he got out!'

'Well, I didn't reckon a deal to the performance. The man's good enough, I ses to myself, but the 'oss isn't. I

admired his pluck, but it was a little bit of a pony that had no chance of extending hisself at a place like Brampton Brook.'

'And that's the sort as he's buying wherever he can find them, a cobby pony with shoulders, and a good job if he clears the country out of the sort; we've too many little 'osses walking about by half.'

'Yes, I'm very fond of a big upstanding 'oss myself, one that looks like galloping on through the dirt, and lifting over a big place when he comes to it. Those are the boys to show you sport and fetch their money afterwards.'

'Well, you never got a better than that big brown 'oss you bought off me two years ago come next Lincoln fair.'

'Come, Joseph, you mean you've never had a better customer than me since. But he was a tidyish 'oss, I will say that about him; his understandings was right.'

'Yes, I should like to meet his little brother to-morrow. I'd have him in my stable before night, as sure as my name's Joseph, and a poor man with it.'

'Well, any way, man, you've got the price of a 'oss in your pocket if you've sold one to-day. Did you make all you asked for your chestnut with the white face?'

'Not by five pounds and more. I ses, "He's as good as gold; there's no better with four shoes on." He ses, "What will you tek?" I ses, "Five and forty, and he's worth every penny of it!" He ses, "Have you had your breakfast this morning, man? You must be hungry, or you would not open your mouth so wide." I ses, "I know he's a real good 'un, one as I can recommend." Ses he, "Then talk like a sensible man, and I'll bid fair."'

'And you worked it at the finish, did you?'

'Well, you want to sell when you've got the chance, though I expect my missus will be fine and cut up when she gets to know I have sold the harness tit!'

'Oh, I don't believe in women interfering, never did! You can never sell a horse if the ladies get talking, especially the wife. Now, I should say, "My dear, you shall have a real smart 'oss of your own to go about with, but you must let me do as I like with my own—if—you—please!"'

'You wait till you are married, my boy; you don't know what home rule is till you are!'

'Well, well, I fear some of us would make a poor show in

double harness; leastwise, I am afraid I should play up a bit sometimes if things were not to my liking.'

'Well, you could sell your pony anyway without having to consider upon it. How did you get on, William?'

'Oh, middlin'! I dangled him away, and he was a sweet cob! There was nothing tilley-willey about him; he could carry himself and me too. I never rode a better round my farm.'

'And he paid you well, I should say, at fifty sovereigns, for he went a bit short sometimes, I remember you telling me, when the going was not to his liking!'

'Well, well, it was nothing, and no detriment to him! In buying a hoss you must always expect to hazard something.'

'Did you warrant him!'

'Not me. I ses, "I don't hold good with such ways. I'll warrant him as far as that road, then I have nothing more to do with him. I believe him to be sound, but sell him as he stands. I won't have no vetenary over any horse I've got in my stable."'

'Did you, by Jove! I always reckoned you was better than most of us at sellin' a 'oss; but what can any gentleman want with twenty summer hacks I should like to know?'

'Oh, he ses it is a hobby of his, and he likes to see them walking about his place.'

'Bless me! I'd a deal sooner see a score of good feeding bullocks, and they'd pay a deal better, I think.'

'Oh, I hates the sight of a hoss nagging the grass on any farm; it's like robbing the wool off the sheep's backs. But the gentleman's building a great place of iron to keep all these ponies in; you can see it for miles round; must cost him thousands before he's finished.'

'Oh, but he reckons he is going to teach them wonders! play with a ball like a toy terrier, pick a lock with their teeth, and see a humble bee half a mile away.'

'Lor, Joseph, it's wonderful, when you come to think of it, what education will do for man or beast; it regular makes my head swim! Come, you are not drinking nothing; let's have another glass to our next merry meeting.'

A little later the two old cronies were hoisted into the market-cart, littered up with straw, and, giving the rein to the old horse, trusted implicitly that he would not say his prayers on the journey, but steer a safe course to his stable-dcor, ten

miles away in the wilds of the desolate old plough country, whilst they dozed, at peace with the world at large.

II.

YOUNG Dick Hopper felt very happy the morning the workmen walked out of his new tin riding school and a long string of rough-looking ponies walked in. It was indeed the eve of a big enterprise, for this manufactory of the raw material into polo ponies was the outcome of much thought and a considerable amount of capital: the iron structure alone cost 450/. Standing within easy distance of his little bachelor cottage, it dwarfed every building in the village, even the enormous haystacks for which the district was famous, and reminded the beholder very much of a temporary tin church in its size and style of architecture. By the neighbourhood, who knew not the ways and means of polo, it was regarded as a gigantic piece of folly, which would probably end in being a sort of museum or home of rest for a mixed lot of rough-looking ponies that had been grazing in its vicinity all the winter. Diamonds in the rough can only be detected by the eye of the expert, and ponies were not regarded as a profitable investment compared with bullocks or sheep, which were the staple industry of the district. The master mind and hand were, however, everywhere apparent; a big coup was intended in the near future which would eclipse anything that had been gained by efforts and forethought in agriculture. Dick was not long before he had callers at his place of business, where he was to be found from early morn to dewy eve, ready booted and spurred, superintending his staff as they put the young ponies through the elementary drill. By the district he was looked upon as a general supply agent, and so one morning the local fishmonger gave him a call, being in want of a nag, and Dick, being in a good frame of mind, humoured him up to the top of his bent.

'Which did you say you thought would suit you?' said he, as they walked down the long stable, with all the ponies tied up, with double chains to the head collars, and swinging bars between each, like cavalry barrack stables.

'That chestnut nag with the white face; he'd do to run my fish-cart all the winter, and win a flapping race in the summer,' said the fishmonger, whose price was 25/.

'Well, you took care to pick a good one while you were

about it. He's about as clever as a book, and I got him for a different game to yours.'

'Yes, sir; but I know for a fact that he naps a bit in harness, because I see him up Bunker's Hill before you bought him, but I durst risk that so long as the price was right.'

'Lor bless me! Well, I must not sell him to a poor man like you; he might upset your cart in the winter, and ruin your racing in the summer.'

'If you'd like to stand in with me, I'd run the risk of that. Now, there a nice little meeting next Easter Monday, where me and my pals want to run a pony, and they'd make it safe for him, and I'd bid you a price now, and half-stakes down when he does win.'

'I understand; a win, tie, or wrangle game. But are you quite sure the pony can gallop? Come in the riding school and judge for yourself.'

When the pony was duly saddled and bridled, he was led into the arena, and Dick asked the fishmonger to stand in the middle while he galloped round him. Placing his hand on the top of the man's head, he treated him as a human post, and galloped the pony like a whirlwind in a small circle round him. The dust and tan rose in a cloud, and the fishmonger, giddy with terror and the rapid revolution round his precious person, gasped for mercy.

'Promise me you won't be up to any of your dirty racing tricks, or I'll ride him to a standstill!'

The wretched man had to vow by all his gods that he would stick to the fishmonger business and abandon the turf.

The outlay on a big iron riding school is considerable, but at the same time the advantages are very great, for it is possible to train a greater number of ponies during the months of bad weather without any interruption, which must occur when attempted in the open. The size of the riding school tan-ride was 100 feet by 35 feet, a sufficient space to test the capabilities of a polo pony, for if he is unable to gallop and turn at top pace in such a space without coming in collision with the wooden walls, he is unfit for the game. The advantages of a closed-in ride are that the instructor can thoroughly engage the attention of his pupil, which is not possible in the open, where a bird in the fence, or a cow bellowing somewhere in the landscape, all tends to distract the pony from the lesson. A month or two's course of exercise in



Galloped the pony round him like a whirlwind

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
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the riding school puts a finish to the education of a pony that greatly adds to his value, and, what is of still greater importance, accomplishes his training in half the time. Thoroughly trained ponies are every season more in demand, because half-broken ones are useless in the game played at the present day, besides being a source of danger to their riders.

It was the end of February that Dick got his ponies up from grass, all nice and fresh on their legs, and frames well covered with flesh, after a winter's run, with a liberal allowance of Indian corn and hay. At first they were fed on soft food for the early days of education, on the principle that it is unwise to cram a child with whiskey when teaching him. As the pupil became more proficient, so his conditioning with hard corn was gradually begun, with plenty of slow walking exercise in between times. At the end of the course, mind and body were properly balanced, and the pony was ready to make a start in an easy cantering game.

Just as old Jorrocks laid it down as a truism that 'where there is no hock there is no hunter,' so in the case of the pony it may be said, 'no mouth, no polo pony.' This point received first attention in the school, many of the older ponies as well as the green ones being bitted, and, with dumb jockey tackle strapped on their backs, turned loose in the school to chew the cud of reflection. The next stage was with long driving reins, to teach them to answer quickly, turn right or left hand, back and stop at word of command. Later on the pony was turned loose to go through the circus-like performance, with his master, riding whip in hand, giving him the signal what to do. Having mastered the A, B, C of polo, and learnt to change on to the right or left leg in the gallop, they were mounted and asked to gallop in circles and big figures of eight. The schooling of a polo pony is a very gradual process, and he is not asked to run before he can walk, or frightened into a game which he does not understand. The mental and muscular powers gradually develop together, the finished article presenting a marvel of blood and iron, with the cleverness of a trick-horse, the handiness of a lady's-maid, and the pace of a telegram. The capacities of a pony to learn the niceties of the game vary as much as that of human beings, and amongst a collection of raw material there are always to be found some that have to be drafted as misfits, and work their time out in harness or general utility purposes.

From the lessons in the school the pony is promoted to a slow cantering game in the open, where he learns to go up to the ball, push his adversary off, and, if he is worth his salt, love the 'rush of the furious ride' with the rider hitting hard and true.

III.

WITH the month of May came showers of urgent telegrams from those who, as usual on the very eve of the polo season, suddenly realised that they had no ponies to play. A glance down Tattersall's sale lists gives the public at once the height of the polo fever, and by the number in the market it might be imagined that we were a nation of horse-dealers. Everything was in order at Dick Hopper's polo emporium; the ponies looked bright on their coats, and, trimmed like bantam cocks, were hard to distinguish as the same rough lot that came up to school. Their education, too, was just as forward, and they could dance round the polo school like a troupe of ballet-girls, or flit about the polo ground like swallows on the wing. Critics and buyers appeared on the scene, plenty of the former and a few of the latter; but still the ponies, after a vast amount of galloping, aided by still more talking on the part of their owner, began to get weeded out, and pay something towards the cost of the new tin riding school.

At last Captain Armstrong, of the Heavy Dragoons, came to inspect the ponies to find mounts for the regimental team, and that was the proprietor's opportunity to empty the stables, and he promised himself and the establishment a jovial half-holiday if all went well. The Captain, who played back for his team, was a bruiser on a pony, and a very hard hitter, who, in every sense of the word, took care of number one. A tour was made of the stables; the capabilities and price of each pony were discussed before any were selected for trial with stick and ball.

'I want moderate-priced ponies that take hold and go into the game. Our men are heavy, and light-mouthed ones are of no use in their hands.'

'I think I can suit you and be well inside the price,' said Dick, as he thought of one or two rank pullers in the team who had time after time been rejected by intending purchasers. 'You see, I make all my ponies in strong bridles. Now I'll show you a couple likely to suit a punishing No. 1 in the game.'

A long-backed bay and a rushing chestnut were sent down the bending course side by side, going into their bridles like bull terriers going for a cat in a trap.

'Those would bother any back in England,' said Dick. 'A cow-puncher is a baby compared to either of them!'

The next pair were a bang-tailed mare with a great turn of speed, and a brown pony called Nipper, as handy as a cat. Down the bending course they flew, changing their leading leg with the certainty of machinery, and afterwards chased the flying ball up and down the greensward like greyhounds loosed from the slip.

'What better could any No. 2 want, a couple of flyers, and the price a mere bagatelle!' said Dick, surveying the show the ponies made with smiling satisfaction. 'Bring out The Nurse and The Goat. Don't lose time, my lads!' shouted the proprietor, and a black and a bay promptly appeared on the scene to be put through the regular performance.

The pick of the basket was reserved till last, and was the white-faced chestnut, who had been named Fishmonger, after his first admirer, who wanted him for illegitimate purposes, but was a regenerate man ever since his adventure in the riding school. An extraordinary quick pony on his legs, he could pull up and turn in two lengths less than any of the team. Jumping from the halt, he was at top pace in a couple of strides, and away before the others had finished turning.

'I like this pony!' said the Captain, swinging out of the saddle, mopping his brow after the exertion, as he cast his eye admiringly over the chestnut's quivering quarters and shaking tail.

'That's what half the backs in England say about him!' said Dick. 'The Blues and the Bays are both sweet on him, coming this week to try and buy him. I thought I would just show him to you. Put him in, Jim; we shall not want him again.'

As they strolled off to lunch, and talked of polo and forthcoming tournaments, the Captain got keener and keener as he thought over his ride on Fishmonger.

'Poor man as I am, he is the very pony for me!' he exclaimed.

'Whichever team gets him, I shall back to win the tournament,' said Dick, adding oil to the kindled flame.

'We are not a rich regiment, worse luck,' groaned the Captain. 'I have the greatest difficulty to find ponies to carry me.'

'And when you do find one, you must not miss him,' added Dick, persuasively.

'I wish you had never shown me your Fishmonger—that chestnut pony. I can do with three or four of the cheaper ones, but I cannot touch his price!' remarked the Captain.

'I do not want all he is worth, though I am a poor man,' said Dick. 'Price must be no object when the chances of winning a tournament for the regiment are at stake.'

A smoke with another whiskey and soda arranged the deal. The Captain got one of the best heavy-weight ponies in England to play back on, and swore horribly at the rest of his team who had to do their best on the much cheaper ponies. The Fishmonger had accomplished another good deed, for he emptied the school stables for his owner, who, with younger ones coming on, will soon be ready for another polo pony enterprise.

RARE BIRDS.

By MAURICE NOEL.



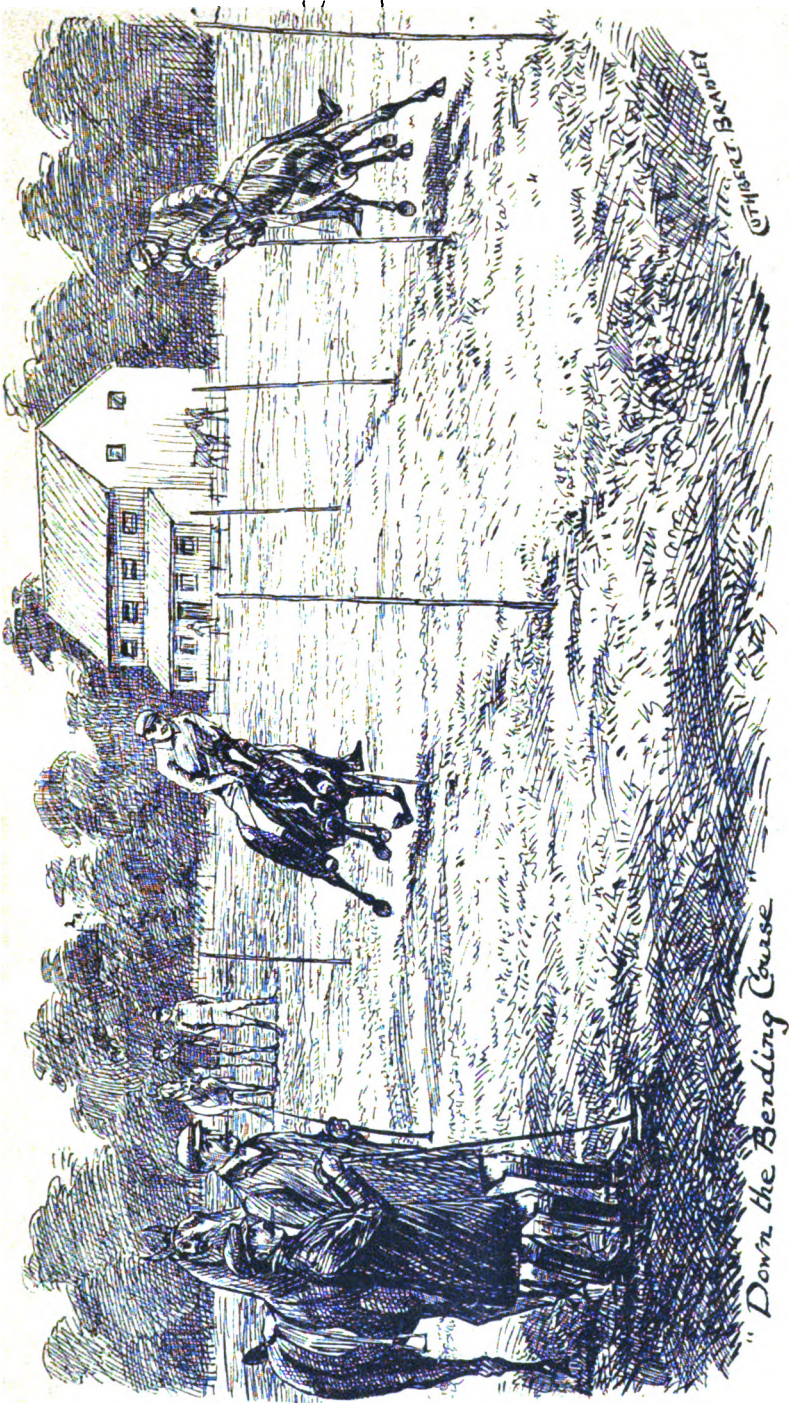
WHEN a rare bird makes its appearance in this country, two results generally follow—the bird is shot, and the gunner is abused by newspaper correspondents.

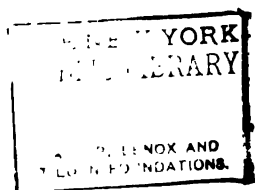
The latter, however, do not, as a rule discriminate; do not pause to consider whether any harm has been done, but write in hot haste to denounce the offender.

Whilst sympathising with their wish to preserve rare birds, one would find, however, that in some cases the gunner did not deserve the abuse bestowed on him.

In order to judge fairly as to this, one should remember that the bird in question must have been either (1) a really rare bird or (2) an occasional visitor, which, if hospitably received, would have been likely to remain with us, or (3) a wanderer from its proper habitat, unsuited to our climate, unable to procure its necessary food, and certain not to remain long.

To shoot a bird belonging to either of the first two classes, would be to commit an offence deserving even the censure it usually receives; but to kill one that could not and would not





live with us, and that was not a rare bird in its own district, is a different matter altogether.

A rare bird is one that has become scarce even in the region to which it belongs, but we are rather apt to call any occasional visitor a 'rare bird,' even though it may be as common as a robin is with us, in its own country.

Amongst our own rare birds we have—to take a few examples only—the Bittern, the Cornish Chough, the Ruff, and the Reeve, and the Golden Eagle, though the latter is, happily, not so rare in Scotland as it is commonly supposed to be.

To shoot such birds as these would be to offend all lovers of nature; if left unmolested, there would be a chance of their increasing in numbers, but if the last remaining specimens were destroyed, they could never be replaced.

But if our own rare birds have the first claim to our protection, occasional visitors, also rare in their own habitats, should none the less be spared; there might, perhaps, be little hope of their living with us or returning home in safety, but give them at least whatever chance they have—*because* they are rare.

As to the second class—visitors which, both as to food and climate, could be suited here—such might, if hospitably treated, remain to enrich the number of species we already possess, and to give pleasure to all who delight in watching birds and their habits. No true sportsman, no lover of nature, would shoot such birds as these.

But although some species are capable of acclimatisation, attempts in this direction frequently end in failure.

For example, on the wilds of Exmoor, where are found the heather and the burn, the silence and solitude, in which the red grouse delights, efforts have been vainly made to introduce these noble birds; and yet their cousins, the black-game, have prospered there for centuries.

Who can explain why grouse should thrive on a Lancashire moor, and yet refuse to increase and multiply on the beautiful hills of Exmoor? Yet, so it is, and we can only admit that Nature will have her way.

Some years ago a number of sand-grouse arrived on our eastern coast during a heavy gale, and if they had been given the chance, they might possibly have settled down in their new quarters, and bred on the dunes of Norfolk. It would have been very interesting to watch the results of leaving them undisturbed, but, unfortunately, they were all shot!

Even when other conditions are favourable, some species become extinct in districts where they formerly flourished, on account of physical changes; if the great bustard could be re-introduced it would, in all probability, soon die out again, for it requires what agriculture cannot afford to give it—wide stretches of plain, and waste lands—such as it finds in Spain.

Speaking generally, it may be said, that very few of the occasional visitors who wander here, or are driven in by stress of weather, would remain to breed, even if unmolested, for, if our country and its food really suited them, they would have settled here long ago, in times when gunners were few, or even before gunpowder was invented.

The case of birds imported from distant lands, is, of course, altogether different. The pheasant, for instance, does as well here as in the far East, but it would never have found its own way to us, and we are considering birds that do so. With regard to class (3), occasional visitors, not at all rare in their proper habitats—who would *not* remain with us, however much they were encouraged to do so, on account of the conditions being unsuitable. Any one who killed such a bird would arouse indignation. For instance, a stormy petrel was shot not long ago in one of our inland counties: the destroyer was, of course, roundly abused, and the proprietor of the estate on which the bird was killed, wrote a humble apology in one of the daily papers.

But, if it had been left alone, what would have happened?

Either it would have found its way back to its home, far out at sea, or would have died of starvation—probably the latter—since it was doubtless exhausted by the severity of the gale which had driven it so far inland.

In any case, one thing is certain: it would not have remained where it was, as some of the almost hysterical letters which appeared on the subject seemed to suggest—nothing but blue water will do for a stormy petrel.

To put the case bluntly, even if it may appear hard-hearted to do so: here was a bird, more likely to die than to return to where it would be a rare bird no longer; here, therefore was an eligible opportunity for securing a specimen.

Or, say that a fat penguin, driven by a northerly gale, was carried on to one of the Norfolk Broads and shot. What an outcry would be raised! We should have letters in which this

pleasing prospect would be at least *suggested*, that if the bird had been cherished as it should have been, it would have taken to its new surroundings, been satisfied with unaccustomed food, changed its habits, and settled comfortably down in a climate for which it was utterly unsuited, that it would have sent favourable reports to its friends (somehow) and induced others of its kind to join it—and that in course of time the Broads would be made additionally attractive by the presence of another interesting species!

As well might one suppose that if the historical cormorant who elected to sit on the spire of a certain church, some time ago, had been properly encouraged, he would have built his nest in the belfry!

Again, in exceptionally severe winters we are occasionally visited by that splendid bird, the Roller—rare in this country, of course, but abundant in certain places. Nothing would induce the penguin or the roller to remain with us long. Dame Nature herself would forbid them to do so.

To shoot either of them, however, would be considered by many a crime, and so it would be, if there were any chance of retaining their company. It is also true that if left alone, some few people might enjoy the pleasure of seeing the birds alive during their short stay; but what proportion would these bear to the many who would be interested and instructed by examining them at leisure in some local museum?

If it be allowable to form a collection at all, it would be difficult to find more harmless conditions than those supposed, under which specimens might be obtained.

In dissent from this view, however, it might fairly be objected that the great majority of those who carry guns would not know which birds should be spared and which might be shot, and that as they would probably shoot them all, the protests referred to are raised in order to prevent indiscriminate slaughter.

This certainly is a difficulty, but since it would be impossible to enforce an order to 'shoot no strange birds,' and as some good might be done by instruction, the publication of a list, drawn up by county naturalists, of such birds as should *always be spared* might be of service. The list would not be a very long one!

The writer hopes he has made it clear that, although he ventures to deprecate the indiscriminate censures alluded to,

no one could be more in favour of sparing and protecting all birds which it would be of any use to spare than he is himself.

Before concluding, another class of birds might be mentioned, against the shooting of which common sense, right feeling, and good taste equally protest. Nothing too strong could be said against those who destroy birds the presence of which, in a neighbourhood, adds a charm to country life, and gives pleasure to all around.

A case in point occurred not long ago near Leeds—a city which lies outside the belt within which alone nightingales are generally found. One year, however, a pair of these nested in a copse within a mile of the place, and night after night people went to listen to the melody they so seldom had the chance of enjoying. Some wretch, however, shot the male bird, and it is satisfactory to know that an angry crowd stoned his house and broke all his windows.

At the present moment, there are on the Penn Ponds in Richmond Park a pair of Great-crested Grebes—happily well protected—which it would indeed be an offence to disturb, for though the bird is not really rare, it seldom breeds where it can be so easily watched and admired. It is quite amusing to see the parents fishing for their two young ones, now three-quarters grown. With that lightning plunge, which has caused it to be said that a grebe, seeing the flash of a gun, can disappear before the shot has time to reach him, the old birds are constantly diving for fish. When successful, the two young ones have a grand race, the winner obtaining the prize from his impartial parent, who holding the prey crosswise between his mandibles, swims slowly towards the pair, rushing like small steam-tugs along the water. Sometimes the young one who comes in first is in such a hurry to swallow the fish before his brother—or sister—can get up, that he clumsily lets it escape, and though he instantly dives for it, he often fails to recover it, not being, as yet, an expert.

On such occasions, the old bird turns contemptuously away, and it has several times happened that, after such a piece of bungling, he has swallowed the next few fish himself, as if to punish his young ones, and teach them to be more careful!

The grebes are now spending their third season on the pond; they brought up two young ones the year before last, but during the nesting-time last season a tea-party was

unfortunately held on the one small island in that water! This apparently caused them to desert—at any rate, no young ones were bred.

To take one last example--the kingfisher. This jewel of a bird might be always with us, for England will always have its merry trout-streams and silver water-ways, and yet only a few years ago it was in danger of becoming extinct, because it came into fashion for ladies' hats! It is a pleasure to record, however, that an outburst of popular feeling checked this intolerable evil, and it may again be seen darting along its accustomed haunts—a gleam of sapphire and emerald.

Reverting to Richmond Park: It is remarkable how few people take advantage of the opportunities of watching bird-life to be found in this most beautiful place. Any number of cyclists there are, and plenty of motor-cars and carriages, but rarely does one meet a pedestrian in the out-of-the-way corners and secluded spots, in which one may roam in comparative solitude throughout a long summer day.

A DAY WITH THE BIG COD.

By HAROLD BINDLOSS.

IT was a clear, cold day in winter when we dropped out of the Conway River on board the six-ton cutter *Plover*, for Johnston, her owner, who said he was not a butterfly, and added with some reason that one often finds as fine days in December as during some summers, kept his yacht afloat throughout the year. During the warmer months he made trouble for yacht club committees over his racing handicaps, and according to his own account recruited his health the rest of the year with the assistance of salt-water angling. It was a drastic cure, and several of the enthusiasts who accompanied him at different times nearly succumbed to it.

Above us the sun shone brightly out of a cerulean sky, and the *Plover's* little red-painted winter mainsail formed a blotch of ruby colour on the green of Conway Bay, but the heights of the Carnarvon range were sheeted white with snow, and the

drift of heavy cloud banks low down over the hills of Anglesey foretold bad weather. Still, the limestone crags of the Orme's Head shone dazzlingly white over our starboard hand, the surf-fringe beneath them glimmered incandescent, and if the sea was sombre-tinted towards the north and east we hoped to get our work done before there was any change worth mention. With this end in view Johnston was carrying all the canvas he could pile on to his vessel, and showers of brine whirled up from the *Plover's* weather bow. They rattled upon our oilskins and stung our blue faces with a touch of icy cold, while froth washed level with the lee rail and the tiny dinghy splashed noisily along the bubbling wake astern.

It was a long beat to windward, and the sunlight had faded before we brought the end of the hog-backed Isle of Puffin and a mark ashore in line, and lowering his topsail Johnston, heaving his vessel to, bade us drop into the dinghy, and strip the long lines he had set on a previous tide. 'She'll turn you out if you're not careful,' he observed; 'I'll stand off and on clear of the Menai Sands, but don't waste more time than you can consistently help. We're in for a change of weather presently.'

We dropped gingerly into the dinghy, and she was nine feet long, up to our ankles in the water that gurgled about inside her, and there was nearly a catastrophe before we settled ourselves and Elmore seized the paddles.

'You'll lose the boat certain if you play those games,' said Johnston, as he trimmed his head-sheets over, and we felt lonely when the *Plover* stood away. The heave of the Irish Sea was stirred by a brisk breeze, while though we were under the partial shelter of Anglesey that was a very small and leaky dinghy. Still, Elmore pulled steadily towards a buoy with a flag attached to it which reeled and dipped above and between the wrinkled undulations. It marked the end of a long-line which Johnston had set because along much of our coast the big cod which feed on the deep water banks all summer come shoreward right up up to the beaches with the frost. They are soft and flabby, often covered also with parasites during the former season, but, scrubbing themselves bright and clean, grow fat, firm-fleshed, and lusty in winter-time. There are, however, localities where for some reason they head outshore in hard frost.

We were soon abreast of the flag buoy, and Elmore span

round and backed the dinghy while I endeavoured to clutch the floating cork. This was by no means easy, for it reeled down on us one moment and sideways away the next, while one takes big risks when leaning too far out from a dinghy of that species. Each time I missed I drenched my arm to the elbow, and after many attempts Elmore inquired, 'Are you going to fool after that thing for ever?'

I seized the buoy at last, and made the rope beneath it fast to the stern, while, though hardly classed as a sporting appliance, sport that is arduous as well as exciting, beside goodly fish may be obtained with the long-line during the sailing man's off season, which may justify a brief description. Long hanks of stout cod-line cost about a shilling, and two coupled form a handy line, while a third may be cut into pieces two or three feet long. A galvanised cod-hook is attached to one end of each with a clove hitch, the other knotted to the parent line, preferably with a loop at the junction into which the barbs may be slipped when coiling. A piece of stone at either end and a buoyed rope to raise it, when wanted, from the bottom, complete the inexpensive outfit.

Johnston, however, used a heavy iron sinker, and this with my weight right aft drew down the stern of the dinghy until the tops of the seas splashed in, and the water lapped my boots before the iron was eventually placed amidships. 'A little more and you would have filled her up,' said Elmore disgustedly, while I rested a few moments before hauling what the professional fisher calls the 'hairy' line.

The *Plover* was several miles away, a mere strip of tawny red canvas slanted to a suggestively sharp angle. Driving vapour obscured the grim Orme's Head, and the sombre cloud which had almost blotted out Anglesey now rolled in dusky masses along the heights of Carnarvonshire. The change Johnston had predicted was evidently not far away. It appeared that we were to be lucky, for very few hooks had come in empty before there was a swift gleam of silver far down in the green depths beneath the dinghy's quarter, and I had to take a turn with the line. A big cod is heavy, and can pull tolerably hard. Still, by degrees I hauled him to the surface where he lay floundering, while after several strokes of the rusty gaff had only resulted in chipping splinters out of the boat Elmore suggested it was time I tried my fingers. 'There's nothing to be afraid of. It won't bite you,' he added.

My hands were, however, half frozen, and a cod's sides are slippery, but at last I got my fingers upon the creature's head and at the risk of upsetting the dinghy slid them backwards towards its gills. The sensation which followed was distinctly unpleasant, but my attention was mainly concentrated on preventing a capsize, and with a quick lift I jerked the victim into our unstable vessel and fell upon it in the water. It must have weighed more than fourteen pounds, and felt about thirty.

The next prize was a lively conger, fortunately of no great size, for an eel is an abomination on any kind of line, and the biggest congers lurk where weedy ledges drop sheer into deep, clear water. It is best to look out for cod upon a rubble bottom, though small ones will follow the flood-tide up the side of a cliff. A surgical operation was, as usual, needed to release the captive, which had knotted itself about the hemp, from the hook, after which it proceeded to wriggle round and round the boat, while Elmore aiming erratic blows at it with an oar butt only succeeded in destroying the symmetry of the cod. A big conger will, so professional long-liners say, snap at anything which comes in its way, but, while I have seen one practically take charge of a boat until it slid over the side, the statement requires confirmation. We, at least, never saw one do so, though there is a story common to various localities of a conger which bit off a 'longshoreman's boot heel. The professionals say this creature keeps its brain in its tail, but the organ is in any case of fair order, for the eel lays in wait where lobster pots are set, and wriggling in and out through meshes or funnel loots all the bait.

Next, a row of hooks slipped in over the transome with nothing on them, and I agreed with Elmore, who said that some confounded crabs or shrimps had been nibbling the good bait off. A long-line may muster as many as four hundred hooks, but only a small number come to the surface with anything attached. Hauling the one in question was wet and dirty, besides somewhat risky work, for each time the dinghy jumped several hooks would be whisked overboard, and the barbs are awkward to extricate from the fingers they fasten in. My hands were also swollen and foul with slime and scales, while the water that trickled from the hemp soaked up both sleeves to the elbow, and pouring down my oilskins ran into my boots. I was accordingly not so pleased as one might have been to see a further

flash of scales, while presently several good cod in quick succession were flung into the boat, and after them a huge thorny-backed skate sailed round and round in tangents near the surface.

When a big skate sets its flat side against the water it needs a very strong pull to master it, and when that one twice broke the surface with a hollow splash I reached for the gaff, and getting both hands on the haft landed it almost on to the knee of Elmore, who became offensively abusive. There is venom in the spines of a skate, particularly the keen thorns its tail is garnished with. It took both of us several minutes to turn the writhing creature over upon its back, and Elmore expended some wild language during the process. When this had been accomplished I stood upon it with one foot on either wing, which is necessary because a skate will roll itself about and grind with its inner spines any object it desires to attack or assimilate, or at least so long-shore fishers say. Accordingly, I cut the whole piece the hook was bedded in out with a sheath knife. No wise man will ever trust his fingers near a lively skate of any size if he can avoid it. Afterwards our captive, which refused to perish and covered much of the floorings, made itself an intolerable nuisance sliding round in the water we had shipped, and slipping unexpected beneath our feet, until we would gladly have flung it over could this have been easily accomplished. As it was, however, we could neither turn the creature out nor keep it still.

I was glad when the last snoods came in, for the skin of my hands was wrinkled, and my knuckles had stiffened almost into uselessness, but the line must still be rebaited before the task was finished. When obtainable, fresh herrings cut cross-wise into sections form perhaps the best bait of all, because the skin, which should be injured as little as possible, shines brilliantly, but pieces of most fish will serve, and where crabs are not too numerous even sand worm, especially if a limpet is placed on the shank of the hook. Its white glimmer can be seen at a distance, and it forms a useful addition to an ordinary hand-line.

Then I suggested a change of places, both to warm myself at the oars and give Elmore a turn at the hauling, and we proceeded to look for the second buoy, but some time elapsed before we could find it. The breeze was freshening, and there were more numerous white splashes on the top of the heave,

while all the hills were rolled in vapour, and we could discover no signs of the *Plover* unless a hazy patch half seen against the shores of Anglesea furnished it.

'Go ahead ; there's the staff yonder,' said Elmore. 'I'm anxious to get this undertaking finished, and fail to see whatever has taken the skipper so far away. He has much more confidence than I have in his dinghy, and the *Plover* would be a big handful if the breeze freshens much.'

It was a stiff pull to reach the buoy against wind and tide, which was setting shorewards strongly now. Noticing how the surf fringe grew broader along the crescent of desolate sands, I also wished the *Plover* was nearer, or that we were not quite so far from the mainland. Those shoals would be swept by the swift flood-stream ruffled into spiteful ridges by the wind presently, and they extended at least two leagues. I accordingly determined that unless Johnston appeared before the second line was stripped, we would commence our homeward journey without him. Elmore captured the buoy with difficulty, and neither of us were sorry there were few fish on the line, for the sea was evidently getting up, and caution was already necessary in holding the craft head to it while my comrade worked astern. Each time she lurched over a slope of brine a little steeper than the rest the froth lapped high at her bows, and small showers of spray rattled upon my oilskins and went down the back of my neck.

The short winter day was drawing near its close, the channels leading shorewards twisted greatly, and were ill to find, so I glanced over my shoulder, looking anxiously for the *Plover*, when it was safe to do so. Meantime Elmore slipped the bait upon the hooks in clumsy haste, commenting, 'If the skipper doesn't find many fish next time he'll fancy it has been because what he calls those devastated crustaceans have been having a good feed again. In any case, the main thing is to get this line over as soon as possible.'

Steadily the seaward horizon narrowed in, while the swell, growing steeper and more wrinkled all the time, hove us sharply aloft and let us sink with a nasty jerk into the hollows, until at last Elmore flung the remaining hooks unbaited overboard, for the slanted shape of the *Plover's* mainsail lurched out of the windward gloom. She grew rapidly nearer and more distinct, driving down-wind with dusky canvas swaying and froth at her bows, while when she swept past our stern, with foam boiling

level to her depressed lee rail, a shout reached us, 'Have you stripped all three lines?'

'No,' answered Elmore, with resolve in his tone; 'nor do we intend to. We have cleared two of them, and enough of this work is at any time as good as a feast. We had better run home across the sands before the sea gets up.'

Meanwhile the yacht reached up to windward, and lay stationary with foresail hauled aback and mainsail bagging, but the skipper's hail reached us, 'Looks ugly. Pull up, and be careful how you come alongside.'

The coming alongside was uncertain work. The yacht rolled one way and the dinghy lurched another, while when after several misses with the boathook I caught her shrouds and held the pair apart Johnston said, 'She seems very full of water, and as she sometimes rolls over when towed with a fair wind you had better heave the fish on board.'

I did not envy Elmore the undertaking. Lifting a heavy, slippery and still living cod with stiffened fingers and flinging it across several feet of foam into a plunging boat is not easy; neither did he do much better when he tried hooking them with the gaff, and holding them out at arm's length for Johnston to grasp. The latter had one hand on the tiller, and the dinghy's topsides might have been smashed had I brought her nearer. Between them my companions dropped one or two good fish into the sea, and each laid the blame upon the other, while Elmore, who appeared to be in a distinctly unpleasant humour, making a fierce effort, hove the skate, still writhing from the gaff-point, into the yacht's cockpit. 'You're going to have your share of that fellow's company; I'm sick of him,' he said.

Then, grasping the *Plover's* rail, he swung himself on board. I followed with the painter, made it fast astern, and we tramped upon the fish, which lay scattered everywhere, as we scrambled forward to set the mainsail's peak. Johnston had dropped it to reduce his vessel's speed before he picked us up.

'You have made a disgusting mess of her,' he said. 'Pile them into those baskets, then get the mop out, and straighten up.'

Elmore answered truthfully, 'Except when you're eating him nicely cooked, a cod is always a disgusting fish, but we're not responsible for its habits.'

Johnston squared the boom away, and we were glad to feel ourselves homeward bound, for the breeze was wailing dolefully,

driving a few flakes of sleet before it across the darkening sea, while the call of the surf rang louder, and there was only a confused loom of dark crags to guide our course ashore. If the sleet came down in earnest we dare not run for port through those treacherous shoals at all. The rocks rose higher and blacker presently, and the sound of the wind gathered volume as it moaned among their crannies, while the boat, pressed too hard by her sail, was burying herself forward in snoring foam ; but the skipper found the channel, and at last odd points of yellow light appeared ahead, vanished, and, growing brighter, rose once more into sight. They blinked here and there among the outskirts of Conway Town, and the *Plover's* crew were glad to see them. We felt unpleasantly sodden and cold to the backbone, our hands were numbed and stiff, and when a rush of sleet swept slantwise down the feeble glitter of lights was lost in it.

A few minutes later the faint black loom of sandhills served as a guide, and very soon, at a shout from the skipper, we roused ourselves to haul the main-sheet in as a tall perch forged towards us out of the obscurity. It whirled by amid a white-streaked race of tide, and one of us, crouching on the wet deck, peered anxiously under the boom, while the skipper stood ready and intent at his tiller. We were sweeping into the Conway River with a five-knot stream beneath us, and a strong breeze astern, while disaster might well follow a collision with any craft at anchor. Once somebody hailed us out of the gloom, again a half-seen object flitted by, then there were brighter lights among the sleet beyond a black ridge representing trees, and the peak swung down with a clatter, while, crouching beneath the slashing jib-sheets, I gripped a long boat-hook.

'Buoy close to weather ! It's not our own, but you could fetch it with a shoot,' I shouted.

'Get it, whoever it is,' answered Johnston, as he jammed down his tiller.

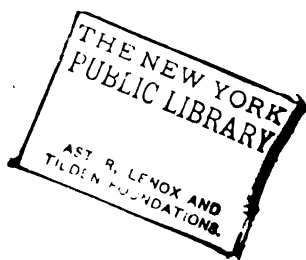
Reaching for the dancing object, I caught it, and held on grimly until Elmore rendered much-needed assistance. Unless we made fast to something smartly, the *Plover* would be driven down on several coasters, or whirled away by the strong tide under the neighbouring bridge.

We fished a big rope from the water, jammed a turn upon the bitts, and then, while the *Plover* swung round to the rush of dark water with loose sailcloth rattling, hauled in the heavy



"WHILE I WORK
SORE WITH LAUGHING"

Vol. Bee



chain it was fast to foot by foot, secured it, and lost no time stowing the hard, wet canvas. Ten minutes later we were dragging the heavy dinghy over slimy shingle and mud that was unpleasantly deep and sticky. A man was waiting for us where it ended with a wheelbarrow, and we almost filled it with the fish, while, when each had chosen what he fancied, Johnston gave directions as to the disposal of the rest. He was a methodical person with a turn for amateur philanthropy, and had, we understood, certain regular pensioners among the poor, who were glad to receive gifts of wholesome food.

About this he, however, said very little, and having set long-lines, as well as trawled with him out of other ports, where I learned he sent the fish to charities, I remember once being present in a Yacht Club smoke-room when an inquisitive member attempted to banter him. 'Have you set up a little shop somewhere, or what do you do with all the fish you catch?' he asked.

Other men glanced at the speaker warningly, knowing that my comrade, who was usually frank and easy-going, resented such questions, and Johnston answered with unusual stiffness, 'That hardly concerns the general public, but for your information I may say that I do not sell any of it.'

NAT LANGAN'S CAT.

By 'UNICORN.'

WHEN I was a boy Nat Langan was a well-known character, half hunter, half loafer, but wholly good-natured, and so willing to lend a helping hand that his natural shiftlessness was to a great extent overlooked and excused by his neighbours. Nat was very fond of boys when they treated him fairly, and did not claim to know too much—that he detested; and many an adventure of my mature years has recalled the value of the early lessons in sport and camping which Nat dispensed with a somewhat stern but kindly hand. He was famous for his stories, but the one I never tired of hearing was that of his famous hunting cat, which, as nearly as I can recollect, was as follows.

'When I was livin' down in Pikeville, Tennessee, afore the war,' he would always begin, 'rabbits were so plenty thet they et up all the truck the darkies could grow, or thereabouts, an' they wor thet cunnin' thet northin' short of a shotgun could touch 'em. Most any day a feller could see half-a-dozen to a score a-skipin' an' a-jumpin' about, an' my 'nspiration come to me one day when I see a big tom cat pounce out on one an' get him. I had a big young cat at home, a bob-tailed one, an' he war as cunnin' as a Christian, an' up to any amount of tricks—fetch an' carry, bring me birds he caught, and sich-like—an' it struck me to train him on rabbits, an' very kindly he tuk t' it. Well, when he got perficient, I cured a rabbit's head-skin an' ears, an' kinder tanned them so as to keep them soft, an' then I fitted 'em on Snoozer, an' he wor a sight fer to see! A yard away nobody could tell what it was, until it moved, an' I used to go out with that cat an' get all the rabbits, quail, an' sich-like as I wanted. Oh, I lived high them days! It was fun to see Snoozer after rabbits; there would be two or three sittin' around an' chewing grass, an' when Snoozer crep' down an' took a hand they never noticed him no more than another rabbit, until fust thing they knew he made his spring, an' there was one rabbit *fur the pot, the others only thinkin' it was a family disergreement, an' I a-laying low an' laughin' till I cried at ther antics of thet cat.

'Smell him? Why, no! I used to rub him with rabbit gall, an' he outsmelled any rabbit you iver met! The greatest time he iver had was when a neighbour's cat, after rabbits too, tackled Snoozer fer one. Neighbour's cat was a great one fer rabbits, an' used to carry 'em home when he killed 'em; but after he met thet Snoozer-rabbit of mine, an' got laid out in a way thet paralysed him, he would run from a dead rabbit like lighternin', an' neighbour could not make out what hed got inter 'im, while I wor sore with laughin'. But the mos' curious thing happened to a big old nigger, called Uncle Ephraim, who was a great sport, too, an' he hed a yeller dog, an' an old Tower of the British Queen muskit, an' used to go prowling erlong the roadsides an' open spots, lookin' fer what he could find! If it war a rabbit, all right; if it war Squire Dixon's hens or turks, all the righter! He war a great coon, he war! Well, oncet I war on my way home jest a little afore sundown, an' Snoozer he war trotting erlong jest a rod or two in front of me. He'd jest gotten inter the road—the main waggon road it war—back of Squire Dixon's

place, an' I was still in the brush making my way to the edge of the clearin', when erlong came that old nigger, an' his gun on his shoulder an' his little yellor dorg at his heels. Suddenly the dorg see the rabbit sitting on the road, an', giving a "Yelp! yelp! yelp!" came straight for it; that was the kind of a hunting dorg he war, durn his skin! The rabbit, or what appeared to be sich, hesitated a second as if uncertain whether to wipe up the road with him or let him go on in his wild career unmer-listed; finally made up his mind to do the latter, and flew to a small jack oak-tree on the edge of the clearin' an' skinned up it, got out on one of the front limbs, an' sot there with one ear laid back, the other one erect, an' his back bumped up like a camel or a calf that the farm boarders in the summer hev been riding round the close.

'At ther sight of this conduct of a rabbit ther little dorg war all broke up, his heart ran down inter his hind paws an' made his tail droop right down an' curl under his belly, an' when it got as low as it well could, away he ran back to his marster. But if the dorg acted funny, yer jest oughter seen that old nigger! He'd brought his gun down off'n his shoulder at the first jump of that rabbit, when the dog yelped; but when he seed the rabbit claw up that tree-trunk, an' get out on the limb, an' hump up its back, he war a little the wust-skeered nigger in Tennessee.

'Now, every one most knows how circumstantial coloured people air on rabbits, an' how they've always got a rabbit's foot hung round ther neck, or somewhere about 'em, to give 'em luck; an' they think a rabbit has got the sense to outwit any other animal, or all of 'em put together. A graveyard rabbit is the best, the left hinder leg of him; an' I never thought 'till long after that there war two murdered niggers buried right close by, in the old days. But Uncle Eph, he warn't a-fergettin' it! It was Hoodoo soup fer him, an' he knew it! If he had seen a hog or a calf climb a tree an' hang by its tail like a monkey he would not have been half so scared as he war over that rabbit, as he presumed it war—an' I don't blame him. His eyes stuck out, an' I could 'most hear the kinks of his hair snap as they tried to straighten out an' stand on end with fright. "'Fore de Lawd, what fing is dat?" he said, as he stood a-shakin' an' a-quiverin' in the middle of the road. At last he tried to put up his gun to shoot, an' jest then the yellor dorg, wonderin' at the delay, came without his seein' it, an' butted its

nose against his master's leg, in a ornery way some cur-dogs have, and Uncle Eph gave a start of fright which jarred off his old gun unexpectedly—*bang!*—an' this completed the work-up, fur the old man dropped his gun, an', turnin' tail, went down the road like a locomotive, dog after him. I stepped inter the road an' hollered, "Uncle Ephraim, come back; I want yer, you old fool!" an' instead of doing so he jest took a half-look round, tore off his coat an' hat, an' laid down inter his work like a two-year-old, raisin' more dust than runaway steers; an' thro' the dust I heard him shout, "Don't come anigh me; 'I 'longs to de Lawd, I does! I 'longs to de Lawd!"

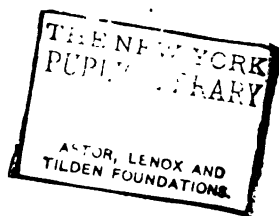
'It war no use, evil conscience hed got after the ole man, an', I let him go, an' whet home mum to everybody. Later in the day, when the darkies quit work, the news went around that Uncle Eph hed seen the devil in the shape of a rabbit thet climbed a tree, and spit fire an' sparks at him, and when shot at, hed jumped out in the form of a man twelve feet high, an' chased him down the lane home. Now I knew thet some of the opper-sition in the meetin' house would not be too ready to berlief this yarn, an' would investergate it; so I stole out quietly, an' went down ther road with a wooden hay-fork, thet hed a good handful of rags tied onter the handle end, and with this I made big spashes in the two-inch-deep dust of ther road, about twelve feet apart, an' scratched claws onto 'em with the other end, an' when the committee erpointed, which consisted of nearly every darkie around, came to investergate, they knew that Uncle hed told trooth, fer they could see the devil's hoof-marks all along the road, mixed up with Uncle's marks.

'Thet night there war a powerful big congregation at the meetin' house, an' as I felt kinder good, I went in to see what was ergoing on, an' I went early, and dragged er fish-head erlong the floor from where I intinded to sit, right down the midway passage, an on to ther platform. Then I come out, and returned with Snoozzer under my coat. Well, there was some excitement, an' no mistake, an' ole Eph could hardly get erlong with his story fer the interruption an' exclermations of his aujience, and at last he got thro', an' concludin', told them that altho' in his mind no one present hed been in ther habit of visitin' hen-roosts, smoke-house, &c., altho' these war pressin' times, an' er man with a family hed to get up an' out, an' hustle,—still he wanted to pass a riserlution thet such things should not be in future. "As to takin' Squire Dixon's bakin', as the devil said



WENT DOWN THE ROAD LIKE A LOCOMOTIVE

H. Ber



to-day," concluded the old man, " why I never knew dat Squire Dixon hed bakin' so 'fore de Lawd ! " "

' Jest then I dropped Snoozer onter the trail of thet fish-head, an' away he went down the alley, straight to where Uncle was a-holding forth, an' jest as the old man said, " I nebber knowed that Squire hed er smoke-house, an' so eben the Prince ob Darkness he makes mistakes——," jest then a nigger on the alley grabbed at my Snoozer-rabbit, and the old cat clawed him, an' spit right in his face, an' with one bound landed on the desk near Uncle Eph. " Dar he is ! Dar he is ergin ! " yelled the old man, in a terrible fright, an' made a rush to the back winder. Well, some darkies made fer the door, others fer the winder, the weak ones war pulled down an' walked on, an' finally they all got out, ivery mother's son believin' his bruises were due to the devil poundin' him. Thet scare larsted for several years, an' there war no need of locks or bolts or bars on smoke-house doors or co'n-cribs in that section.'

And right here old Nat would stop, and commence to get his pipe filled, as if the story was ended, and I had to press him to tell me more, and what became of the famous cat after all.

' Well,' he would resume, ' one day Snoozer an' I were around the lots, and I war pretty well loaded down, an' hed fergot to take off the rabbit's ears, and the cat war a-huntin' natural along ther inside of ther fence, when down comes a big hen hawk, an' thinkin' Snoozer a rabbit, tries to carry him off for supper. I calkerlate thet hawk got quite a shock, for Snoozer he turns on his back an' he goes fer that bird kerflip, an' they hed to fit it out, fur I could not shoot fer fear of the cat, an' to mend matters, when I dropped my load an' clomb the fence to help, my foot slipped, an' down I came an' sprained my back badly in fallin', an' broke some ribs. The hawk flew away, an' I crawled home, an' my wife sent a nigger fur ther doctor who came an' laced me up, and said I war not to stir from bed fer a two months at least. Well, Snoozer hed got badly hurt, an' hed not come home, an' I worried a good deal about it, an' in two weeks I got so weak an' low about it, that I nearly petered out. The cat niver liked womenkind, and he war a-lookin' fer me in the woods, an' I knew it, an' thet he would not come near the house onless he saw or heard me. Well, a city feller as knew me come erlong, an' says he, " You're weak, you are, an' want a nice nurishin' soup, an' I guess I'll take the ole gun, an' see what I can get ! " So off he

went, an' pretty soon I heard ther ole gun bark, an' I thought game must be gettin' pretty pert while I was on my back. I fell asleep, an' an hour or two later my wife comes in with a bowl of smoking soup, an' makes me get up in my bed an' swaller every drop. And good it tasted to me, fer I hed hed nothin' but slops fer two week, an' hed no ambition to try anythin' else; an' so I laid inter it, until the first edge bein' gone I says, "'Manda, what soup is this, fer it has a curious taste." "No curious taste at all," she snapped, "it's good fress rabbit soup it is, an' jest you eat the rest."

'Well, I eat, but it seemed to get a snaky taste, an' the colder it got, an' the more my hunger went, the snakier it got, but I finished it fer peace sake, an' bimeby the city feller come in to say good-bye. I looked at him hard, an' I says, "Was thet a good fat rabbit you shot me, er was it a lean big one?" And he says, "It war a beauty, awful big, but not very fat, an' the roundest pair of feet I ever see." "Fetch me the skin," I said; "I can amuse myself with it." And he did so, an' left it with me, an' went away, an' when I war erlone I opened out thet skin, an' sure enuff, it war ole Snoozer, an' I'd eaten the best cat that ever wer, an' dar'dn't say a word about it, but let everybody think it war the hawk thet carried Snoozer off. There's lot of 'em down ther' remember him, an ther's more darks remember Uncle Eph's awful visitation.'

NOTES ON NOVELTIES.

THE best racing prints since Herring's, is the verdict which we think will be very generally pronounced upon the new set of coloured plates just published by Messrs Fores from the drawings by Mr. John Beer.

They illustrate 'The Derby' in eight tableaux, and constitute a very complete pictorial record of the incidents of the race for the 'Blue Riband of the Turf' from beginning to end. Plate I., *The Paddock*, introduces us to the well-known field at Epsom, where the candidates are having finishing touches put to their toilets, and prominent amongst whom we recognise Volodyovski, William III., Veronese, &c. In plate II., *The*

Parade, the horses are shown with their attendants making their way on to the course. This, and the next plate, *Going to the Post*, give excellent opportunities for unconventional and picturesque grouping, of which the artist has not been slow to avail himself. Plate IV. gives us *The Start*—the first one at Epsom with the 'gate' in use, and in plate V.—*Climbing the Hill*—they have got well away, and are settling to work. In plate VI. we see them rounding *Tattenham Corner*, while plate VII. represents an excellent *Finish* between Lester Rieff and Morny Cannon, which admirably displays the characteristics of the American and English styles. Finally, plate VIII. depicts in effective and original manner the well-known scene, *Returning to Scale*.

A rough idea only of the design and composition of these subjects may be obtained from the little reproductions which appear in our advertisement pages, but for their beauty of colour and artistic treatment we must refer our readers to the prints themselves.

An interesting souvenir of a great race by the same artist is that of *The Hardwicke Stakes*, 1887, when the mighty Ormonde, Minting, and Bendigo contended at Ascot. Mr. Beer's picture of this celebrated finish is full of 'go' and spirit, while he has caught Tom Cannon and Johnny Osborne to the life.

The same firm has also issued a pair of pretty little reproductions in colour of drawings by Mr. B. E. Minns, entitled *Obstinacy* and *Angling*. In the first, a young lady is endeavouring to cross a narrow bridge against the remonstrance of her fox-terrier on the one side, and the evident disinclination to give way on the part of a stolid pig on the other. In the second, Master Cupid is seen fishing for certain coronetted gold-fish with a maiden's heart as bait, its fair owner being meanwhile an intensely interested spectator of the sport.

The recently-published volume entitled *Annals of the Horse-shoe Club*, is probably the most interesting and amusing work hitherto produced by that popular and versatile sporting author,

Finch Mason, and in the sixteen tales, which are supposed to have been related by members of the club from which the book takes its title, will be found a variety of incidents connected with sport in general, and Hunting, Racing, Steeplechasing, and Shooting in particular, prodigal enough to satisfy the most exacting and omnivorous of readers. The illustrations are in the author's best style, and the publishers are Chatto and Windus.

A seasonable publication by Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew, & Co., is *An Account of the Courting and Sporting Adventures of William Wobbleswick*, by W. J. Hodgson. It is in Album form, and the illustrations are naturally its chief feature. These are clever and humorous, and almost render unnecessary the explanatory text, as they speak so well for themselves.

FORES'S SPORTING NOTES & Sketches.

295366

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NOTES ON NOVELTIES.



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'HOLD UP, YOU ABSENT-MINDED BEGGAR!'

is the objurgation of a Huntsman to his mount, who on landing over a fence has unmistakably 'pecked.'

LORD SILENUS, M.F.H.,

long passed the heyday of youth, addresses a fair equestrienne, who is accompanied by three young sportsmen, thus: 'Well, my dear Mrs. Merryweather, busy rattling the cubs about as usual, heh?' To which she replies: 'Yes, don't you wish *you* were a cub?'

JOE WAGLEY,

addressing a local Tattersall, who is hesitating about negotiating a stiffish hurdle: 'Come, Tappington, don't waste your time over a lot like that. Knock it down, man! knock it down!'

DOCTOR DILL

is depicted on his favourite hunter 'Pick-me-up' enjoying a day with the Queen's Hounds. In the corner of the picture an old gentleman, presumably a patient, is interviewing a boy in buttons, who in answer to his query replies: 'No, sir; master's gone to Windsor—it's his day with the Queen, sir.' The old gent had no idea that the Doctor numbered Her Majesty among his patients!

THE BUTTERCUPSHIRE YEOMANRY RACES.

The humour of this sketch is supplied by the dialogue. Major Bang, addressing the Sergeant, who is evidently on the Race Committee: 'Well, what's going to win this race?' To which the Sergeant, in a hoarse whisper, answers: 'Come back, Major, in five minutes; *we haven't arranged it yet!*'



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THE NEW YORK
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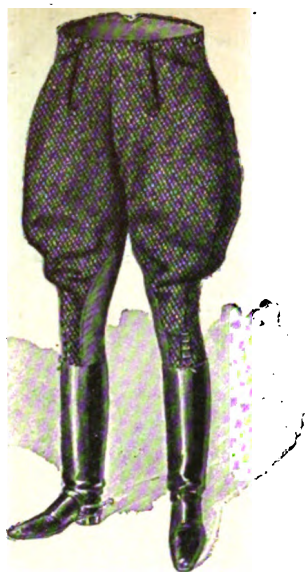
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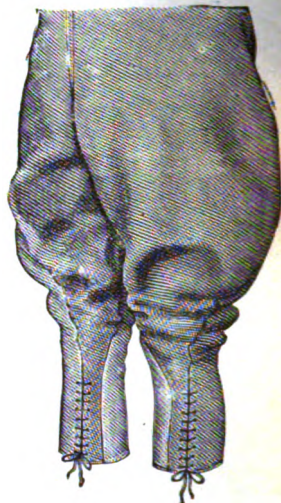
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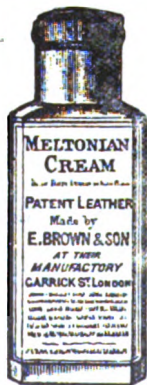
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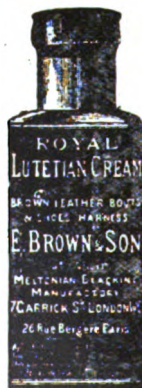
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